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(12911)

F.O.

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FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING

ABYSSINIA

PART IV

**CLOSED
UNTIL**

1976

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 1925

19

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PART IV

SEPTEMBER TO DECEMBER 1925

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22 To Colonial Office	" 21	Submits that suggested protest to Abyssinian Government should not be made until it is seen if Fitaurari Ayella is strong enough to maintain order. As an alternative, proposes to instruct Mr. Bentinck to make mild communication at Addis Ababa and transmits draft for concurrence (see No. 24) ...	19
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39 To Mr. Bentinck No. 224	Oct. 6	Instructs to inform Abyssinian Government that His Majesty's Government view with grave concern frequent murders of Maji mail-runners and neglect to arrest criminals ...	38
40 Mr. Bentinck... No. 130	Sept. 9	Transmits memorandum by Mr. Zaphiro on state of affairs in Abyssinia, with which he agrees, as do also Italian Minister and Dr. Martin ...	38
41 Mr. Bentinck... No. 143	" 28	Refers to No. 40. Plot against life of Ras Taffari. Sentences passed on conspirators ...	43
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45 Mr. Bentinck... No. 161	" 16	Refers to No. 127, Abyssinia, Part III. Local court at Dadar. Transmits explanation from Consul Plowman, and requests issue of order empowering consul to hold courts anywhere in his district ...	46
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48 Mr. Bentinck... No. 186	" 16	Reports that Ras Tafari has sentenced three British Somalis to death. Gross irregularities of judicial procedure. Transmits copies of judgment and pleadings, &c., and requests authority to send condemned men out of Abyssinia ...	48
49 To Mr. Bentinck No. 310	Dec. 8	Refers to No. 45. Transmits order empowering His Majesty's consul at Harar to hold courts anywhere in his district. Unofficial arbitral tribunals may be allowed to continue to exist ...	64
50 To Mr. Bentinck No. 80. Tel.	" 14	Refers to No. 48. Instructs to make communication to Abyssinian Government and to arrange for removal of prisoners as soon as safe. Threatens to publish correspondence. French and Italian assistance has been invited ...	64
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53 Mr. Bentinck... No. 117. Tel.	Dec. 22	Suggests postponement of action on No. 50 until his return from Sudan in January ...	66
54 Lord Crewe ... No. 2748	" 22	Reports and transmits copies of correspondence with French Government, who have promised to instruct their representative at Addis Ababa to support Mr. Bentinck in the matter of the three British Somalis condemned to death ...	67
55 Mr. Bentinck... No. 118. Tel.	" 23	Refers to No. 50, and reports message conveyed to Ras Tafari through Bilata Herui, who urged patience on the grounds of delicate position of the Ras ...	68
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58 Mr. Bentinck... No. 120. Tel.	" 24	Ras Tafari has begged Italian Minister to assist him in reaching settlement with Mr. Bentinck on question of three Somalis condemned to death ...	69
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66 To Mr. Bentinck No. 238	Oct. 15	Refers to No. 65. Points out that as no decision regarding slavery was taken by Assembly in 1925 subject is not likely to become live issue for some time. Promises to try and interest British and American Missionary Societies in Abyssinia ...	76
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68 Mr. Bentinck... No. 138	" 28	Reports conversation with French missionaries in Harar. Effect of missionary enterprise on slavery conditions in Harar province ...	78
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70 To Mr. Bentinck No. 257	" 29	Refers to No. 68, and transmits papers showing inaccuracy of Ras Tafari's statement that slavery survived in Sudan and Kenya ...	80
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(c.) White Paper.

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101 To Mr. Bentinck No. 79. Tel.	" 14	Informing that publication will take place 14th December ...	100

(d.) Miscellaneous.

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104 Colonial Office	" 30	Agrees that money should be detained	102
105 To Mr. Bentinck No. 266	Nov. 4	Refers to No. 102. Instructs to inform Abyssinian Government that money will be detained until Kanyazmatch Laku is punished and compensation paid to people of Nakalale	102
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Chapter VI.—TSANA AND OTHER CONCESSIONS.

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109 To Mr. Bentinck No. 237	Oct. 15	Has considered proposals put forward in No. 108. Explains why transfer of Jibuti would prove impracticable	106
110 Sir R. Graham No. 234. Tel.	" 20	Reports return of Senator Contarini and reopening of Tsana conversations. Objections put forward by Governor of Eritrea. Local opposition from Abyssinian chiefs friendly to Italy. Asks if Mr. McGregor's assistance is available	107
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112 To Mr. Henderson No. 1134	" 21	Transmits copy of provisional draft note to Italian Government regarding Lake Tsana as amended since receipt of No. 93	108

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116 Sir R. Graham No. 942	Nov. 7	Refers to No. 114. Reports further conversations with Italian officials and proposes addition to Italian note to cover interests of local Abyssinian chiefs. Requests instructions	113

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117 Mr. Murray to Sir R. Graham	1925 Nov. 9	Refers to No. 116. Suggests alternative to proposed Italian addition to British note	114
118 Mr. Bentinck... No. 91. Tel.	" 13	Reports arrival of Swiss engineer believed to have been engaged by Abyssinian Government for independent report on Lake Tsana possibilities	115
119 To Mr. Bentinck No. 276	" 16	Refers to No. 115. Appreciates friendly attitude of French Minister and agrees that His Majesty's Government cannot run the risk of a rebuff	115
120 Mr. Bentinck... No. 94. Tel.	" 17	Learns that Swiss engineer will shortly leave for lakes	116
121 Sir R. Graham No. 999	" 27	Reports further discussion of draft notes and transmits draft of proposed Italian reply. Requests instructions	116
122 To Sir R. Graham No. 1895	Dec. 10	Refers to No. 121. Accepts Italian draft and agrees to allow insertion of passage providing for interests of local Abyssinians and submits draft of passage in question	120
123 Sir R. Graham No. 302. Tel.	" 24	Text of notes has been agreed and notes signed, but actual exchange cannot take place before return of M. Mussolini to Rome	121
124 Sir R. Graham No. 303. Tel.	" 27	Formal exchange of notes took place 26th December. Italian Government agree to joint communication to French Government	122
125 Sir R. Graham No. 304. Tel.	" 27	Discusses importance attached by Italian Government to Wady Shebeli	122
126 Sir R. Graham No. 1076	" 24	Reports eleventh hour insistence by Italian Government on assurance regarding the Wady Shebeli before final exchange of notes regarding Lake Tsana. After argument question reserved for decision by M. Mussolini, after return from Naples	122

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Further Correspondence respecting Abyssinia.

PART IV.

CHAPTER I.—ARMS TRAFFIC.

[J 2799/130/1]

No. 1.

The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 24.)

(No. 2067.)

HIS Majesty's representative at Paris presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of a note from the Ministry for Foreign Affairs dated the 23rd September respecting the purchase in England of two revolvers and 200 rounds ammunition by Ras Tafari.

Paris, September 23, 1925.

Enclosure in No. 1.

French Ministry for Foreign Affairs to British Embassy.

Paris, le 23 septembre 1925.

PAR sa note du 9 de ce mois, l'Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne à Paris a bien voulu demander au Ministère des Affaires étrangères de lui faire savoir si le Gouvernement de la République verrait des objections à ce que le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique autorisât la livraison à destination de l'Ethiopie de deux revolvers et de deux cents cartouches, que le Prince Régent d'Abyssinie désire acheter en Angleterre.

Le Ministère des Affaires étrangères serait reconnaissant à l'Ambassade britannique de bien vouloir se référer à la précédente correspondance qu'il a eu l'honneur d'échanger avec elle à ce sujet. Dans cette correspondance, en effet—et en particulier par ses lettres des 3 et 30 avril 1925—il a eu l'occasion à différentes reprises de lui marquer le point de vue du Gouvernement français en ce qui concerne l'importation des armes en Ethiopie et de lui exposer les raisons pour lesquelles il estime que cet Etat souverain, membre de la Société des Nations, a le droit de se procurer librement les armes nécessaires à la sauvegarde de son intégrité et de son indépendance.

L'Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne voudra bien se rappeler, au surplus, sa lettre du 28 avril, par laquelle elle a fait part au Ministère des Affaires étrangères du désir de son Gouvernement—désir qu'il avait exprimé également à Rome et à Bruxelles—de voir ajourner après la conférence qui venait alors de s'ouvrir à Genève, sur le commerce international des armes et munitions de guerre, l'examen d'une demande présentée par le Gouvernement belge et relative à l'importation en Ethiopie de 100 fusils mitrailleurs et 100,000 cartouches achetés en Belgique par le Ras Tafari.

Le Ministère des Affaires étrangères, en confirmant que le Gouvernement de la République estimait qu'étant donné le caractère d'intérêt international que tend,

de plus en plus, à revêtir la question de l'importation des armes en Abyssinie, il y aurait lieu d'adopter les principes qui seraient dégagés en la matière par la Conférence de Genève, fit savoir à l'Ambassade de Grande-Bretagne, par sa lettre du 7 mai 1925, qu'il ne voyait pas d'objection à l'ajournement suggéré par le Gouvernement britannique.

Il semblait donc ressortir de la proposition même du Gouvernement britannique qu'il était disposé pour sa part à partager ce point de vue et à s'en remettre pour la ligne de conduite à adopter en matière d'importation d'armes en Éthiopie aux dispositions qu'arrêterait la Conférence de Genève.

Or, une convention signée en date du 17 juin 1925 a exclu l'Éthiopie des zones dites "zones spéciales" et arrêté, dans son article 28, des dispositions particulières la concernant.

Dans ces conditions, il semblerait donc qu'il y ait lieu dès maintenant, c'est-à-dire avant la mise en vigueur de la convention du 17 juin 1925, d'en appliquer les dispositions, en ce qui concerne l'Abyssinie.

[J 2941/130/1]

No. 2.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 6.)

(No. 118. Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, August 27, 1925.

I OBSERVE from your note to the Italian Ambassador in London of the 4th July, a copy of which was forwarded to me under cover of your despatch No. 125 of the 6th July last, that the new Arms Traffic Convention respecting Abyssinia is not likely to come into force before the end of this year. From your despatch No. 781 to His Majesty's Ambassador at Brussels of the 4th July I observe also that His Majesty's Government are examining the whole question with the other Powers interested, and have not yet decided on the precise policy which they intend to adopt.

2. I shall be grateful to receive early intimation as soon as a definite line of policy shall have been decided upon. I have reason to believe that Ras Tafari intends before very long to apply to me for a supply of arms and ammunition from England on the grounds of the decision recently reached at Geneva. If he should do so, I would propose to reply somewhat on the lines of paragraph 1 of this despatch and so postpone giving any definite reply for the time being.

3. It is scarcely necessary for me, however, to point out, as my despatches Nos. 53 and 80 of the 23rd June and the 15th July already show, that I am fully alive to the great danger in respect of frontier raids which the importation of arms and ammunition into this country, howsoever guaranteed, is bound to entail. At the same time I realise equally that if arms and ammunition are in any case now to be imported into Abyssinia for the use of the Abyssinian Government, it is obviously of advantage to us, commercially, that they should in that case be supplied by British rather than by French or Italian firms. It is equally expedient, politically, in view of our desires in this country, that we should show ourselves accommodating in respect of the thing desired by the Ethiopian Government above everything else.

4. It might be suggested that if we should ever consent to anything of the kind, it would have to be on receipt of a solemn promise in writing from the Abyssinian Government that any soldiers or civilians found selling rifles within the proximity of the frontiers will be severely punished; but I must confess that in practice such a promise would, I fear, have little if any value.

5. The suggestion put forward by the late Colonel Doughty-Wylie in his despatch No. 95 of the 12th December, 1911, to which the late Mr. Thesiger referred in his despatch No. 12 of the 14th February, 1912, as a possible solution, namely, that the new rifles be paid for partly in money and partly in old rifles, seems to be worth considering in the new situation which now confronts us, provided always that France and Italy could be persuaded to agree to this.

6. I may here mention that I understand that since the Geneva decision Ras Tafari has changed his mind and cancelled the application for 10,000 Italian rifles referred to in my despatch No. 53 of the 23rd June.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 2941/130/1]

No. 3.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 234.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 14, 1925.

SINCE writing your despatch No. 118 of the 27th August you will have received my despatch No. 210 of the 24th September; from this you will have seen the attitude which His Majesty's Government have adopted in regard to the new Arms Traffic Convention, and you will have learnt of the proposal made to the French Government for the institution of a system of jointly signed transit permits for all consignments of arms destined for Abyssinia.

2. The operation of the transit permit system would have the same result as a rationing agreement, seeing that, although purchases would not necessarily be vetoed, delivery could always be prevented. For the moment, therefore, I do not intend to raise again the question of a rationing scheme, more especially as it was found impossible to arrive at any agreement as to the annual quota when the question was last discussed between the representatives of the three Powers in Abyssinia in the spring of 1924. If the French Government refuse to consider the proposals for a transit permit system it may be necessary to fall back on some rationing scheme, but this would have to be agreed to before the new convention comes into force. A rationing scheme entered into before the convention comes into force would be safeguarded by article 34, whereas once the convention is in force it will be ruled out as being in conflict with article 18, paragraph 3.

3. In paragraph 4 of your despatch you suggest that the Abyssinian Government should promise that any soldiers or civilians found selling rifles near the frontier will be severely punished. I do not think that any such promise is necessary seeing that by acceding to the convention the Abyssinian Government will undertake to put into force all the regulations necessary to fulfil the provisions of articles 12 to 16. On the other hand, if and when any considerable purchase is authorised, it may be possible to arrange that each rifle should bear a mark or number by which it could be identified, lists of these identification marks being circulated to the Governments of the Sudan, Kenya and British Somaliland. These markings will make it possible to judge, in process of time, whether arms sold to the "Central Government" become diffused, as there is some reason to fear they will, instead of being retained by the regular forces as the Abyssinians allege will be the case. You will notice that the new convention only provides for the marking of arms destined for the use of private individuals (see Annex II, section 1, paragraph 2).

4. If the French Government agree to the transit permit system it will be necessary to warn the Abyssinian Government of the existence of such an agreement. Subject to any observations you may wish to make, I consider that a note should be addressed when the proper time comes to Ras Tafari jointly by you and your French and Italian colleagues informing his Excellency that the three Powers, mindful of Abyssinian interests, have carefully considered the new convention in all its aspects and, with the idea of helping Abyssinia to fulfil the obligations she has accepted, have devised the system of jointly signed transit permits for consignments of arms destined for Abyssinia. His Excellency might at the same time be told that it will be in Abyssinian interests to refrain from ordering consignments anywhere unless and until it is certain that a transit permit will be granted.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3120/130/1]

No. 4.

The Marquess of Crewe to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 23.)

(No. 2238.)

Sir,

Paris, October 22, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 2215 of the 19th October and previous correspondence relative to the proposed exchange of notes in regard to a system of transit permits for arms imported into Abyssinia, I have the honour to enclose copies of notes which are being addressed to-day to the French Government by myself and

[14106]

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the Italian Ambassador. You will observe that since the correspondence enclosed in my despatch referred to above, the Italian Embassy have embodied in their note the passage, to the omission of which their attention was drawn.

I have, &c.
CREWE.

Enclosure 1 in No. 4.

The Marquess of Crewe to M. Briand.

M. le Ministre,

Paris, October 22, 1925.

ON the 7th April His Majesty's Ambassador had the honour to address a note to M. Herriot, calling his attention to the question of the traffic in arms and ammunition to Abyssinia and stating that, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, it was essential that consistent and concerted action between the French, Italian and British Governments should be put into effect, in order effectually to dispose of this problem.

2. In reply, your Excellency was so good as to state in a note, dated the 2nd May, that the Government of the Republic was of the opinion that it would be advisable to await the results of the forthcoming Arms Traffic Conference at Geneva before taking any action in the matter, in order that such action might be in conformity with the principles to be laid down by this conference.

3. As your Excellency will be aware, article 28 of the International Convention of the 17th June, 1925, drawn up by the above-mentioned Arms Traffic Conference contains a declaration by the Abyssinian Government, whereby the latter undertakes to put into force, so far as concerns its own territory, all regulations which may be necessary to fulfil the provisions of articles 12 to 18 inclusive of the convention relating to exports, imports and the transport of arms, ammunition and implements of war, and an undertaking by the other high contracting parties to conform to the provisions of those articles so far as concerns Abyssinian territory. It results from this declaration and undertaking that the importation into Abyssinia of any articles comprised in categories I, II, IV and V, as laid down by the Geneva Convention, must be subject to the grant of a transit permit by one of the three Powers exercising jurisdiction within the territories contiguous to Abyssinia according to the provisions of article 18 of the convention.

4. His Majesty's Government, together with the Italian Government, consider that it would be profitable to amplify, as far as Abyssinia is concerned, the provisions of article 18 of the Geneva Convention by proceeding to an agreement between the French, Italian and British Governments, whereby each of these three Governments would undertake not to grant a transit permit permitting articles comprised in the categories I, II, IV and V and consigned to Abyssinia to be imported across the territories placed under its jurisdiction without the previous concurrence of the other two.

5. As your Excellency will no doubt recognise, such an agreement arises out of paragraph 3 of article 18 of the Geneva Convention. The three territorial contiguous Powers must, in the nature of things, be particularly concerned at the importation of weapons and war material which might conceivably be used against them, although, when the three Powers were satisfied that no such threat existed, they would naturally place no obstacle in the way of the acquisition by the Abyssinian Government of the arms and ammunition of which it stood in need. But for paragraph 3 of article 18 of the convention to have any real force, some such agreement as that outlined above would, in the eyes of His Majesty's Government, seem necessary.

6. Should your Excellency be prepared to accept this proposal, I am directed to suggest that the most suitable manner of confirming the agreement between the three Governments would be to proceed to an exchange of notes between the Italian and British Embassies in Paris and the Ministry for Foreign Affairs.

7. I am further directed to add that, should the Government of the Republic be prepared to give its assent to the proposed arrangement, it would, in the opinion of His Majesty's Government, be desirable to include in the notes to be exchanged a provision declaring that the three Powers agree amongst themselves to apply the principles of the Arms Traffic Convention with regard to imports into Abyssinia pending the coming into force of the convention. In this way the delay which may take place before the Geneva Convention comes into force would be nullified. A decision, such as is suggested, to apply the principles of the Geneva convention to Abyssinia in advance of

ratification would supersede, so far as Abyssinia is concerned, the existing agreement, under which the provisions of the Arms Traffic Convention of 1919 relating to the "prohibited areas" defined in that convention were to be put into force by certain Powers, including France, Italy and Great Britain. Even if the French Government was to prefer to maintain that agreement rather than apply the principles contained in the Geneva Convention, the suggested arrangement for consultation between the three Powers before transit licences are granted would seem to be required, in order effectively to implement article 10 of the 1919 convention.

8. I should be grateful if your Excellency would be so good as to inform me in due course of the views of the Government of the Republic on this matter.

I have, &c.
CREWE.

Enclosure 2 in No. 4.

Memorandum communicated to French Government by the Italian Ambassador, Paris.

PAR sa note du 7 avril 1925, l'Ambassade royale d'Italie a eu l'honneur d'attirer l'attention du Ministère des Affaires étrangères sur la question de l'importation des armes et munitions en Ethiopie, intéressant, à son avis, d'une façon particulière les trois Puissances ayant juridiction sur les territoires limitrophes dudit État, à savoir : la France, la Grande-Bretagne et l'Italie.

Le Ministère des Affaires étrangères, par sa note du 2 mai 1925, a bien voulu faire connaître qu'il paraissait opportun au Gouvernement français d'attendre le résultat de la Conférence pour le Contrôle du Commerce international des Armes et Munitions et des Matériels de Guerre s'ouvrant à Genève le 4 mai 1925, et de se conformer aux principes dégagés en la matière à la suite des échanges de vue qui seraient intervenus relativement au régime de l'importation des armes en Ethiopie.

Ainsi qu'il est à la connaissance du Ministère des Affaires étrangères, la Conférence de Genève a terminé ses travaux. La Convention internationale du 17 juin 1925, issue de cette conférence, contient à l'article 28 une déclaration de l'Ethiopie par laquelle celle-ci s'engage à se conformer aux stipulations réglant l'importation des armes dans les zones spéciales (articles 12 à 18 inclus), ainsi qu'un engagement des autres hautes parties contractantes à se conformer aux stipulations des articles susmentionnés, en ce qui concerne le territoire éthiopien.

Partant, toute importation en Ethiopie d'articles rentrant dans les catégories I, II, IV et V de la Convention de Genève sera soumise à la concession d'un permis de transit d'une des trois Puissances ayant juridiction sur les territoires limitrophes de l'Ethiopie, sous les conditions et les réserves contenues à l'article 18 de la convention.

Le Gouvernement italien, d'accord avec le Gouvernement britannique, estime qu'il serait utile de compléter, pour ce qui concerne l'Ethiopie, les dispositions de l'article 18 de la Convention de Genève en procédant à un accord entre la France, la Grande-Bretagne et l'Italie par lequel chacune de ces trois Puissances s'engage à ne pas accorder de permis de transit, à travers le territoire placé sous sa juridiction, d'articles rentrant dans les catégories I, II, IV et V à destination de l'Ethiopie, sans le consentement des deux autres.

Un tel accord, dérivant du paragraphe 3 de l'article 18 de la Convention de Genève, donnerait à celui-ci une plus grande efficacité. Il est dans l'ordre naturel des choses que ce soient les trois Puissances limitrophes de l'Abyssinie qui aient le plus grand intérêt à surveiller l'importation en Ethiopie des armes et munitions : une étroite entente entre elles est partant nécessaire pour écarter toute menace éventuelle. Il est entendu, d'autre part, que si les trois Puissances susdites sont convaincues qu'aucun danger n'existe, elles n'opposeront naturellement pas d'obstacle à l'acquisition de la part du Gouvernement abyssinien des armes et munitions dont il pourrait avoir besoin.

Pour le cas où le Gouvernement français serait disposé à adhérer à l'accord projeté, l'Ambassade royale a l'honneur de proposer que ledit accord soit établi par un échange de notes entre le Ministère des Affaires étrangères et les Ambassades de Grande-Bretagne et d'Italie à Paris.

Le Gouvernement italien estime qu'il serait souhaitable, au cas où la proposition en question serait accueillie par le Gouvernement de la République, de spécifier dans les notes à échanger que, en attendant l'entrée en vigueur de la Convention de Genève, les trois Puissances sont d'accord d'appliquer sans délai les stipulations de ladite

convention se réfère à l'Éthiopie. Cette clause permettrait d'avancer, pour ce qui concerne l'Éthiopie, la mise en vigueur des stipulations de la Convention de Genève, et elle remplacerait l'accord existant d'après lequel certaines puissances, dont la France, la Grande-Bretagne et l'Italie, sont tenues à appliquer les dispositions concernant les "zones prohibées" visées à la Convention pour le Trafic des Armes de 1919.

L'Ambassade royale d'Italie, d'ordre de son Gouvernement, a l'honneur de prier le Ministère des Affaires étrangères de bien vouloir lui faire connaître son point de vue sur la proposition qu'elle a l'honneur de lui soumettre.

Paris, le 22 octobre 1925.

[J 3216/130/1]

No. 5.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 2.)

(No. 154.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, October 10, 1925.

MY Italian colleague recently told me that there were in the Customs at Addis Ababa about 1,500,000 empty cartridge cases. These had been imported from France. They were intended for a syndicate composed of certain people in Addis Ababa, who had been granted the right to fill them and then to sell them locally at a profit. The legal adviser to the Ras, M. de Bellefonds, was a member of this syndicate, and the question was one of importance to him personally. Since the decision taken at Geneva whereby fire-arms and ammunition could only be imported by the Government, Ras Tafari was, my colleague said, reluctant to give the order for the release of these cartridge cases, but the French Minister was pressing him to do so.

2. With the permission of Count Colli, whose relations with the French Minister are scarcely cordial, I enquired of my French colleague as to the facts of the case. M. Gaussen, whilst expressing his pleasure that I had approached him in the first instance before reporting the matter to my Government, told me that the cartridge cases were part of the original consignment reported in Mr. Bullock's telegram No. 31 of the 17th June, 1924. The French Government, he reminded me, had always refused to admit that empty cartridge cases came under the heading of "arms and munitions," the import of which into Abyssinia was controlled by treaty (see Foreign Office note to the Italian Ambassador of the 30th July, 1924). He would tell me in confidence, however, that, when he heard about two months ago of the arrival of this consignment at Jibuti, he had referred the matter to his Foreign Office and advised the Governor of Jibuti likewise to refer the matter home. The Ministry for the Colonies had replied, evidently without consulting the Ministry for Foreign Affairs, that the consignment could be forwarded to Addis Ababa, whilst the Ministry for Foreign Affairs had instructed M. Gaussen that the consignment had better remain at Jibuti for the present. Great was the surprise of M. Gaussen when, in spite of this, he learnt that the cases had reached the Customs at Addis Ababa. He then discovered that contrary instructions had been given by the two Departments.

3. M. Gaussen observed that as a matter of fact the recent Geneva Agreement was not yet in force, and until the fourteen States adhered, it would, he thought, take about a year. He had nevertheless caused a serious warning to be conveyed to Ras Tafari to the effect that, if he should allow these cartridges to be filled and sold in the market, this would be contrary to the terms of the Geneva Agreement, and that a very bad impression would be created in Europe if, directly after having obtained this concession from the Powers principally concerned, the Abyssinian Government should act contrary to it. M. Gaussen considered that in sending such a warning to Ras Tafari he had now done his duty. It is possibly due to this step that the Ras cannot decide to release the cases from the Customs.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 3216/130/1]

No. 6.

Mr. Murray to Mr. Phipps (Paris).

My dear Phipps,

Foreign Office, November 9, 1925.

SINCE our conversations here about the arms traffic in Abyssinia, we have received the enclosed despatch* from Bentinck reporting the arrival at Addis Ababa of a large quantity of empty cartridge cases.

You will recall that about the time that Ras Tafari left for Europe in the spring of 1924, the Acting Governor of Jibuti (perhaps with the knowledge of the French Minister at Addis Ababa) granted permits for the import into Abyssinia of 1 million percussion caps and 3½ million cartridge cases for Gras rifles. (Of this, the 1½ million cases now in question form part, according to the French Minister.) The matter originally came to the knowledge of the Italian Minister, who at once communicated with his British colleague. Lord Crewe was instructed in June 1924 to ask the French Government whether it was true that these permits had been granted, and, if so, what was the explanation of the extraordinary action taken by the Acting Governor of Jibuti. The French Government replied that the Governor's action was justifiable, seeing that the material in question was not covered by the terms of the convention of 1906, which said nothing about incomplete arms or ammunition.

After consulting the Italian Government, a further note was addressed to the French Government in November 1924, pointing out that the convention of 1906 implemented the Brussels Act, which laid down (article 8) that the signatories should do all in their power to prevent the introduction into Abyssinia of powder and shot to be used for cartridges. The action of the Governor of Jibuti constituted a contravention of the Brussels Act. The French Government replied that, in the opinion of the late Lord Curzon and M. Poincaré, the convention of 1906 had been superseded by the Convention of Saint-Germain, and that there was therefore no conventional reason why the Governor of Jibuti should not grant permits for consignments such as that in question. Furthermore, Abyssinia, as a member of the League of Nations, was at liberty to purchase such material as she needed for her self-defence, it being for the League to exercise any necessary control over the supply of arms to that country.

In March of this year the British and Italian representatives in Paris replied refuting the French arguments, but the French Government remained obdurate and unconvinced, and the matter is now no farther advanced than at the beginning of last year. It is to be hoped that the promises made recently by M. Briand to the Secretary of State may result in the French authorities adopting a less unsympathetic attitude, and perhaps in their acceptance of the Italian scheme for jointly-signed transit permits. The action of the French Minister, reported by Mr. Bentinck, appears to indicate that the French Foreign Office at least are prepared to co-operate with His Majesty's Government and the Italian Government.

In our recent note to the French, we suggested that the transit permit system should be brought into operation at once—that is, before the new Arms Traffic Convention comes into force. It is perhaps not unduly optimistic to hope that the French Government will agree to our scheme. Correspondence in the past as to whether incomplete parts are covered by the various conventions has led to no result. They are so covered by the Geneva Convention of this year, and to reopen the question now would perhaps merely queer the pitch for the transit permit negotiations which, if they succeed, will effectually preclude repetitions of such irregularities by the Jibuti authorities.

For the reasons stated in the preceding paragraph, we are disinclined to reopen this vexed question in official correspondence. We hope for a successful issue to the transit permit negotiations, and desire to do nothing which might prejudice their course. In the circumstances, if you think it would help these negotiations you might convey unofficially to M. Berthelot, or some other suitable person, that—

- (a.) On his own showing, M. Gaussen appears to have behaved very properly, and we hope he will continue to use his influence to prevent these cartridge cases being filled and sold.
- (b.) It is obviously desirable that the French Colonial Office should not take a line divergent from that pursued by the Quai d'Orsay.

* No 5.

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Meanwhile, we are asking Bentinck whether he gathered from anything which M. Gaussen may have let fall that there was any foundation for Count Colli's allegation that M. de Bellefonds was a member of the syndicate who proposed to load and sell the cartridges.

Yours ever,
J. MURRAY.

[J 3216/130/1]

No. 7.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 272.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 9, 1925.

I HAVE caused a copy of your despatch No. 154 of the 10th ultimo, regarding the arrival at Addis Ababa of a large consignment of empty cartridge cases, to be sent to the counsellor of His Majesty's Embassy at Paris under cover of a private letter,* of which a copy is enclosed herein.

2. In the meanwhile I shall be glad to learn whether, in the course of your interview with M. Gaussen, or subsequently, you were able to ascertain the accuracy or otherwise of Count Colli's statement that M. de Bellefonds was a member of the syndicate who proposed to load and sell the cartridges.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3320/130/1]

No. 8.

Mr. Knatchbull-Hugessen to Mr. Murray.—(Received November 13.)

My dear Murray,

Paris, November 12, 1925.

AT Phipps's request I went to the Quai d'Orsay this afternoon on the subject of your letter of the 9th November. I was unfortunately not able to see the head of the department which deals with Abyssinia, but I saw his next in command and drew his attention to the case of the million and a half cartridge cases at Addis Ababa. I expressed appreciation of the attitude of M. Gaussen, and pointed out that we were inclined to regret that, owing to the permission given by the French Colonial Office, the cartridge cases had been forwarded from Jibuti to Addis Ababa. M. Bruère said that he thought the action of the Colonial Office had been taken partly under the impression that the consignment of cartridge cases in question was the last to be allowed under the old system, i.e., before the Geneva Arms Convention. He assured me that there was no *mauvaise volonté* on the part of the Colonial Office here, and that the lack of liaison between it and the Quai d'Orsay was not likely to occur again. I expressed the hope that in future the two departments would act in concert.

I asked whether anything could be done to ensure that the cartridge cases in question were not filled and sold, and M. Bruère expressed the opinion that the best way to act in this matter would be for our two Ministers at Addis Ababa to work closely together. M. Gaussen had general instructions in this sense, and M. Bruère was sure that he would do anything possible. I could not get him to undertake to send instructions to Addis Ababa for M. Gaussen to take action on this particular point, but he promised to speak to M. Ponsot, the head of the department, about the whole business.

In reply to a question as to how the Quai d'Orsay were getting on with the consideration of the English and Italian notes of the 22nd October about the transit of arms to Abyssinia, I was informed that the question was still under examination, and I got the impression that the French would be likely to stick as closely as possible to the Geneva Convention and not to agree to anything which went beyond it. M. Bruère expressed the opinion that, as Abyssinia was a member of the League of Nations, and as the Geneva Convention would shortly come into force, it would be difficult to take further action to limit their right to import arms. This, however, was only his personal view.

Yours ever,

HUGHE KNATCHBULL-HUGESSEN.

[J 3430/130/1]

No. 9.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 23.)

(No. 177. Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, October 30, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 154 of the 10th instant, I have the honour to report that my French colleague volunteered to me to-day some further details regarding the import of the empty cartridge cases. It appears that the concession for their sale had been sold to two French protected subjects. These had had to pay large sums of money all round to obtain the cartridge cases, and finally a considerable sum had been paid to the Ras for a declaration from him, in conformity with the principle of the Geneva Agreement, that they were for the Abyssinian Government. At the last moment, however, the Ras had refused to give the declaration, but had not returned the money. The Frenchmen would now be able to sell the cartridges, probably at a small profit; but the Minister professed to be much disgusted at the whole affair. If he were to say anything to the Ras, the latter would, of course, blame the French authorities for having released the cases from Jibuti and sent them to Addis Ababa. He assured me that never again in any circumstances would he be a party to a similar transaction, which seems to worry him considerably.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

CHAPTER II.—FRONTIERS.

(a.) Frontier Demarcation.

[J 2486/314/1]

No. 10.

Foreign Office to Colonial Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 1, 1925.

WITH reference to your letter of the 25th ultimo, regarding the demarcation of the frontiers of Abyssinia, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before the Secretary of State for the Colonies, copies of two despatches on this subject from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa.*

2. As stated in the letter from this Department of the 4th ultimo, the inter-departmental conference which discussed the measures to be taken to prevent raiding across the Sudan-Kenya boundary was in general agreement with the opinion expressed by Mr. Bentinck that the question of the frontier north of Lake Rudolf should not be raised with the Abyssinian Government at present. As regards the delimitation of the Abyssinia-Kenya frontier east of that lake, Mr. Chamberlain shares Mr. Amery's view that this question should be left in suspense for the time being.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 2889/314/1]

No. 11.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received October 2.)

Sir,

Downing Street, October 2, 1925.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 1st September, forwarding copies of despatches from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa regarding the question of the demarcation of the frontiers of Abyssinia.

2. In this connection I am to transmit to you the accompanying copy of a confidential despatch which has now been received from the Governor of Uganda,† submitting his observations on the recommendations of the Frontier Conference, held at Kitgum in April 1924.

3. As the questions raised by the Governor of Uganda have been discussed in recent correspondence, the Secretary of State does not think it necessary to offer any further comment in detail; and I am to enclose the draft of a reply which, with Mr. Secretary Chamberlain's concurrence, it is proposed to return to Mr. Gowers. It will be observed that the draft indicates that it is not intended to raise the boundary question with the Abyssinian Government at the present time; and, in this connection, I am to say that, as the suggestion that the Abyssinian Government might be approached came from your Department, Mr. Amery does not wish to pursue it, if, as he assumes, Mr. Chamberlain accepts the opinions on the subject expressed by His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa.

4. It is presumed that Mr. Bentinck has been informed of the conclusions arrived at by the conference at the Foreign Office, and of the action subsequently taken, and I am to enquire whether any reply has been returned to the suggestions made by him in the despatches enclosed in your letter. As regards the last paragraph on the first page of the printed copy of his despatch No. 50, Confidential, of the 19th June, I am to say that any decisions which may be taken with a view to securing more effective patrols by the King's African Rifles will, of course, be communicated to your Department; and the officer administering the Government of Kenya is being asked to keep His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa informed direct on these matters. So far as the establishment of a King's African Rifles post at Labor is concerned, I am to enclose a copy of a recent despatch from the Acting Governor of Kenya giving details

* Part III, Nos. 98 and 99.

† Not printed.

as to the future disposition of troops in the Turkana and northern frontier areas.* It has since been arranged that this scheme should come into effect at an early date, probably before the end of the year. It will be seen that it provides for a garrison of one company of King's African Rifles in the Labor mountains near Lokation, and for a civil administrative officer with forty police to be stationed at this new post as well.

I am, &c.

W. C. BOTTOMLEY.

Enclosure in No. 11.

Draft Despatch to Governor Gowers (Uganda Protectorate).

(Confidential.)

Sir,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your confidential despatch of the 15th July, submitting your observations on the recommendations of the Frontier Conference held at Kitgum in April 1924.

2. You will since have received my confidential despatch of the 28th August, from the enclosures to which you will have learnt that the question of the recent raids of Sudan tribes in Kenya, and generally the position of affairs on the Sudan-Kenya frontier, were considered at a conference at the Foreign Office, and that, as a result, the possibility of arranging King's African Rifles patrols to operate from the Kenya side of the frontier in co-operation with patrols of the Sudan defence force is to be taken up with the inspector of the King's African Rifles as soon as he reaches Nairobi.

3. As regards the Sudan-Abyssinia boundary, I am to enclose a copy of a further letter from the Foreign Office forwarding despatches from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa, from which you will see that the conference at the Foreign Office was in general agreement with Mr. Bentinck's opinion that this matter should not be raised with the Abyssinian Government at present.

4. In paragraph 9 of your despatch you refer (a) to the importance of inducing the Sudan Government to introduce a more effective administration in the area in question, and suggest (b) that, failing such a solution, the Government of Uganda should resume the boundary north of the Turkwell River and take over the "Sudan triangle" in addition.

As regards (a), it will be seen from the enclosures to my despatch of the 28th August that the Governor-General of the Sudan has undertaken to examine the possibility of arranging for more effective patrols by the Sudan defence force, and as to (b), I have to refer you to the extract from the letter to the Foreign Office of the 4th May, enclosed in my confidential despatch of the 27th May, in which reference is made to the fact that the suggested transfer of the "triangle" is impracticable for political reasons.

5. I fully share the views of your Government as to the seriousness of the position arising from these raids, and the importance of taking early and effective steps to deal with them. It is clear, however, that discussion of the boundary question with the Abyssinian Government is unlikely to lead to any tangible results, and that the extension of, and co-operation between, patrols by the King's African Rifles and the Sudan defence force offers the best prospect of a satisfactory solution. I, therefore, trust that the further consideration to be given to the matter by the Governor-General of the Sudan and the Inspector-General of the King's African Rifles will result in measures which will prove effective in dealing with future raids, and will lead to an amelioration of the present unhappy position of the inhabitants of the area in question.

6. A copy of this despatch, in the terms of which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs has concurred, has been sent to the officer administering the Government of Kenya.

I have, &c.

* Not printed.

[J 3011/1792/16]

No. 12.

*Sudan Government Office to Foreign Office.—(Received October 13.)**Wellington House, Buckingham Gate, London,
October 13, 1925.*

Sir,

IN reply to your letter of the 5th instant, I have the honour to inform you that after further discussion with Major-General Huddleston, and as the outcome of the discussion held at the Colonial Office recently, it has been decided to reconsider the matter of the proposed withdrawal of the Sudan Defence Force post from Ikotos, and the military detachment will consequently be retained there for the present.

The possibility of moving it to a point further east would naturally be a matter for discussion between the military representatives of the Sudan Defence Force and the King's African Rifles at the conference which it was proposed to hold somewhere in the Zulul area with a view to studying terrain.

Telegraphic instructions have been sent to Khartum to detail a representative, Major Barker, to meet Major Cholmley, and it is suggested that the detailed arrangements for the holding of the meeting should be arranged direct between Khartum and Nairobi.

I have, &c.

G. F. ARCHER,

Governor-General of the Sudan.

[J 2889/314/1]

No. 13.

*Foreign Office to Colonial Office.**Foreign Office, October 14, 1925.*

Sir,

WITH reference to your letter of the 2nd instant regarding the demarcation of the frontiers of Abyssinia, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to request you to inform Mr. Secretary Amery that he concurs in the terms of the draft despatch on this subject which it is proposed to send to the Governor of the Uganda Protectorate.

2. His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa was informed in a despatch, dated the 6th August last, of the decision taken by the inter-Departmental meeting held at the Foreign Office on the 30th July. No separate reply has been sent to Mr. Bentinck's despatches, of which copies were sent to you on the 1st September, seeing that the suggestions there put forward related to the lines on which he should reply if the Abyssinian Government protested against the establishment of a British post in the neighbourhood of the Labur and Murueris Mountains, or if they made a spontaneous proposal for the demarcation of the frontier. Mr. Chamberlain does not feel that instructions need be sent to Mr. Bentinck until either protests or proposals materialise; if they do, there can be no objection to turning them to account, but the precise method of doing so can hardly be defined so far in advance.

3. Copies of this correspondence are being sent to Mr. Bentinck.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 3011/1792/16]

No. 14.

*Foreign Office to Colonial Office.**Foreign Office, October 16, 1925.*

Sir,

WITH reference to the letter from this Department of the 25th ultimo, regarding the situation on the Sudan-Kenya frontier, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to request you to lay before the Secretary of State for the Colonies the accompanying copy of a letter on this subject from the Governor-General of the Sudan,* and to state

* No. 12.

that, subject to any observations that Mr. Amery may desire to make, he proposes to approve the suggestion put forward in the last paragraph that the detailed arrangements for holding the proposed conference should be arranged direct between Khartum and Nairobi.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 3149/314/1]

No. 15.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 26.)

(No. 140.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, September 28, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copies of correspondence with the Government of Kenya and the Abyssinian Government regarding the report that the latter Government contemplated establishing a military post at Kalin, in Turkana.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 1 in No. 15.

Acting Governor, Kenya, to Mr. Bentinck.

Sir,

Nairobi, Kenya, July 8, 1925.

MR. CONSUL HODSON, who has recently visited Nairobi, informs me that the Abyssinian Government is contemplating the establishment of a military post at Kalin, in Turkana. Mr. Hodson refers to the matter in his intelligence report for June. In this report, as you will observe, he states that orders were recently issued for men to be sent to build houses in Turkana, and that a doctor would be sent from Addis Ababa; the soldiers, however, refused to go.

2. As you are aware, Kalin is well within the boundary of this colony, and I should be grateful for any further information you may be able to give me on this subject.

3. Should the report be corroborated, the Acting Governor requests that an intimation be conveyed to the Abyssinian Government that this Government would regard any such step as a violation of British territory, and would hold itself free to take such action as it considered necessary.

I have, &c.

NORTHCOTE,

Governor's Deputy.

Enclosure 2 in No. 15.

Mr. Bentinck to Ras Taffari

(After greetings.)

Your Imperial Highness,

Addis Ababa, July 31, 1925.

THE Acting Governor of Kenya Colony has informed me of a report which has reached him to the effect that the Ethiopian Government contemplate the establishment of a military post at Kalin, in Turkana. Orders were said, recently, to have been issued by the Ethiopian authorities that soldiers should be sent to build houses in Turkana, and that a doctor from Addis Ababa would accompany them.

As Kalin is well within the boundary of Kenya Colony, the Acting Governor has enquired of me as to the truth of this report, as he would regard such a step as a violation of British territory. It is impossible for me to believe that the Government of Ethiopia can have taken upon itself the responsibility of issuing such orders which, according to the letter from the Acting Governor, might even produce a serious situation between our two friendly countries. I should, therefore, be grateful if your Imperial Highness could cause urgent enquiries to be made with a view to ascertaining by whom such orders can have been issued. I shall await your Imperial Highness's answer before I reply to the letter from the Acting Governor.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 3 in No. 15.

Ras Taffari to Mr. Bentinck.

(Translation.)

(After greetings.)

Maskaram 2, 1918 (September 12, 1925).

IN reply to your letter of the 24th Hamlei (the 31st July, 1925), in which you informed me that you have heard that the Ethiopian Government contemplated building posts for soldiers in Turkana, I have to inform you that the Ethiopian Government has contemplated the establishment of some police posts on the frontier, but I assure you that they have not contemplated the building of houses beyond the frontier.

Until we have delimited the frontier, even if it is necessary for us to build on the place about which we had decided to wait, we shall first discuss the matter with you.

(Seal of Ras Taffari.)

Enclosure 4 in No. 15.

Mr. Bentinck to Ras Taffari.

(After greetings.)

Your Imperial Highness,

Addis Ababa, September 28, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 19th instant. I am glad to take note of your assurance that the Abyssinian Government have no intention of building houses across the border in Turkana. I shall forward your note to my Government for, as I told you in my letter of the 31st July, any violation of British territory, as had been rumoured, might have produced a serious situation between our two friendly countries.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 5 in No. 15.

Mr. Bentinck to Governor and Commander-in-Chief, Kenya.

Sir,

Addis Ababa, September 28, 1925.

REFERRING to my telegram of the 26th instant, I have to inform your Excellency that, on receipt of your despatch of the 8th July last respecting the report that the Abyssinian Government contemplated establishing a military post at Kalin, in Turkana, I addressed to Ras Taffari an enquiry dated the 31st July. After I had addressed a reminder to His Imperial Highness on the 31st ultimo, I received a reply dated the 12th instant, to which I am to-day addressing an acknowledgment. I enclose copies of the correspondence.

I consider the reply from the Abyssinian Government satisfactory. They have now received timely warning, and I do not for one moment imagine that they would be so insane as to do anything to risk a collision with our forces.

I am forwarding copies of this correspondence to the Foreign Office and to His Majesty's consul at Maji.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 3149/314/1]

No. 16.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 253.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 28, 1925.

I HAVE to inform you that I approve the action taken by you and reported in your despatch No. 140 of the 28th September in connection with the alleged intention of the Abyssinian Government to establish a post at Kalin, in Kenya territory.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3184/314/1]

No. 17.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received October 30.)

Sir,

Downing Street, October 29, 1925.

I AM directed by the Secretary of State for the Colonies to transmit to you, for the information of Mr. Secretary Chamberlain, a copy of a despatch to the Governor of Kenya on the subject of the demarcation of the frontiers of Abyssinia.

I am, &c.

S. H. WILSON.

Enclosure in No. 17.

Mr. Amery to Lieutenant-Colonel Sir E. Grigg.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Downing Street, October 28, 1925.

WITH reference to Mr. Northcote's confidential despatch No. 108 of the 10th July, I have the honour to transmit to you a copy of further correspondence with the Foreign Office regarding the demarcation of the frontiers between Abyssinia and the Sudan and between Abyssinia and Kenya.

2. I also enclose a copy of a confidential despatch which I have addressed to the Governor of Uganda in reply to his confidential despatch of the 15th July, a copy of which was sent to your Government direct by him.

3. As regards the penultimate paragraph of Mr. Bentinck's despatch No. 50, Confidential, of the 19th June, enclosed in the Foreign Office letter of the 1st September, I have informed the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs that any decisions which may be taken to secure more effective patrols by the King's African Rifles will, of course, be communicated to the Foreign Office and that you would be asked to keep His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa informed direct on these matters. I shall therefore be glad if you will bear this undertaking in mind.

4. So far as the establishment of a King's African Rifles post at Labur is concerned, I furnished the Secretary of State with a copy of the Acting Governor's despatch of the 10th June giving details as to the future disposition of troops in the Turkana and northern frontier areas. I added that it had since been arranged that this scheme should come into effect at an early date, probably before the end of the present year.

I have, &c.

L. S. AMERY.

[J 3562/314/1]

No. 18.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 7.)

(No. 181.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, November 10, 1925.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 235 of the 14th October last, I have the honour to report that about a couple of months ago, when I was having tea with Ras Taffari, His Imperial Highness expressed the desire to arrange for the delimitation of the Anglo-Abyssinian frontiers. He had asked Mr. Russell about this, but had never received any reply. On the 5th October, when discussing the question of the Hendesa raid, His Imperial Highness again raised the question of frontier delimitation. He had, he said, mentioned the matter to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald when in London in 1924, and the latter had promised to examine it. He had since spoken to Mr. Russell about the question, but he had never received any answer from His Majesty's Government. I reminded him that when Major Gwynne had been sent to delimit the southern frontier, the Abyssinian representative, a German named Schubert, had arrived three months late. I asked to which frontier he referred. He said to all. I observed that the Sudan was a very large one, and would take a long time and be very expensive. I asked if I was to take this as an official request to my Government, but his answer was not very definite.

2. At a subsequent interview he again reverted to the subject, and I suggested that he should send to me an official note which I could forward to my Government.

This the Ras said he could not do, as, having already asked His Majesty's Government to delimit the frontier and having been told by Mr. MacDonald he would look into the matter, he was now awaiting a reply from His Majesty's Government. I expressed my willingness to forward an official reminder if he would send me something in writing which should have the authority of the Ethiopian Government. His Imperial Highness said he would consider this and the subject was dropped.

3. A few days ago Belata Heroui, who is said to enjoy the confidence of the Ras and who is, with Dr. Martin, perhaps the only Abyssinian who knows anything about England and the English, told me how anxious he was for the best relations between England and Abyssinia. Good relations with England, he said, would be greatly to the advantage of his country. He went on to say that many people were envious of the friendly personal relations which existed between the Ras and myself. They were trying to destroy this by making mischief between us. If ever any differences should arise, he would always gladly lend his good offices and explain my point of view to the Ras, or *vice versa*.

4. The question of the annoyance caused to us by raids over our frontiers was then raised and Belata Heroui asked why we did not arrange for frontier delimitation. He had been present when the Ras had approached Mr. MacDonald on the subject. I referred to the Schubert incident, the great expense, and finally I told him that I did not see how any Abyssinian could be found with sufficient authority to undertake such an important task. When Belata Heroui demurred to this, I instanced the comparatively simple question of the raid over the Somaliland frontier at Hendesa in 1923, which I had hoped might have been settled locally between His Majesty's consul at Harar and Dejazmatch Imaru, the Deputy Governor. Unfortunately Dejazmatch Imaru had not the authority to reach a settlement, and the matter had had to be referred to Addis Ababa. The only people in the country, I said, who would have the necessary authority to be able to undertake the task of frontier delimitation would be the Ras himself, together with Fitaaurari Hapta Giorgis (Minister of War). Our conversation then came to an end. The impossibility of the old and decrepit Minister of War personally making this journey to the feverish border countries with the heir to the Throne was obvious.

5. My impression is that Ras Tafari would like to have the frontiers properly delimited, and thus remove possible causes of friction. He has, however, not the power to undertake the task, nor could he ever modify in the slightest degree the Menelik line. This, however, he would never admit. We must, nevertheless, face the fact that the present régime in Abyssinia has not got the power in the country to agree to frontier delimitations acceptable to us. And so, until delimitation has been undertaken, His Imperial Highness can always reply to us when complaints are made about raids that we had better delimit the frontiers, otherwise we cannot be quite sure of the exact line. He can then profess a grievance against us.

I have, &c.
C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 3562/314/1]

No. 19.

Foreign Office to Colonial Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 11, 1925.

WITH reference to the letter from your Department of the 29th October regarding the demarcation of the frontiers of Abyssinia, I am directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to request you to lay before Mr. Secretary Amery the accompanying copy of a despatch* from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa, reporting that Ras Tafari has once more reverted verbally to this subject.

2. A record of the conversation† in which this subject was discussed between Ras Tafari and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald last year is enclosed herein for convenience of reference. It was as a result of this conversation that the question of delimiting the frontiers was taken up with the Sudan Government and subsequently, through your Department, with the Governments of Kenya and Uganda.

3. Subject to any observations which Mr. Amery may desire to make, Sir Austen Chamberlain proposes to inform Mr. Bentinck that, as Mr. Ramsay MacDonald stated to Ras Tafari last year, His Majesty's Government are ready to proceed with the

* No. 18.

† Part II, No. 36.

demarcation of the undelimited parts of the Sudan-Abyssinia, Kenya-Abyssinia and British Somaliland-Abyssinia frontiers. But before appointing a Boundary Commissioner or incurring the expense of collecting technical staff and equipment, His Majesty's Government must receive satisfactory guarantees that:—

- (a.) The Abyssinian Commissioner and his staff will be ready and equipped to accompany his British colleague the moment the latter arrives; and
- (b.) The Abyssinian Commissioner, owing to the lack of facilities for communication in Abyssinia, will have full powers to accept, on his own responsibility and without reference to Addis Ababa, adjustment and modification of the treaty frontiers necessitated by tribal or geographical considerations which can only be appreciated on the spot.

4. As it is improbable that the Abyssinian Government will be prepared at this stage to give these guarantees, although they are not merely reasonable but essential conditions in the light of past experience, it is unlikely that an early delimitation of the frontiers will become necessary. It is proposed to leave it to Mr. Bentinck's discretion whether to make a communication in writing in the above sense without waiting for a written note from the Abyssinian Government.

I am, &c.
JOHN MURRAY.

[J 3718/314/1]

No. 20.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received December 23.)

Sir,

Downing Street, December 23, 1925.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to acknowledge the receipt of your confidential letter of the 11th December, forwarding a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa regarding the demarcation of the frontiers of Abyssinia.

2. I am to request you to inform Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain that, so far as the Abyssinia-Sudan frontier and the Abyssinia-Somaliland frontier are concerned, Mr. Amery is in agreement with the action which Sir Austen Chamberlain proposes to take. The Abyssinia-Somaliland boundary has not hitherto been mentioned in this correspondence, but I am to refer in this connection to the letter from this Department of the 30th October, 1919, which enclosed copies of correspondence with the Government of Somaliland with regard to the possibility of delimiting it.

3. In the case of the Abyssinia-Kenya boundary, however, Mr. Amery feels that, having regard to the attitude of the Government of Kenya to this question as expressed in the Acting Governor's despatch of the 10th July (a copy of which was sent to you in the letter from this Department of the 25th August), it is necessary to consult the Governor with regard to this new proposal for the delimitation of the boundary, and he has accordingly addressed to Sir E. Grigg the despatch of which a copy is enclosed.

I am, &c.
W. C. BOTTOMLEY.

Enclosure in No. 20.

Mr. Amery to the Governor of Kenya.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Downing Street, December 23, 1925.

WITH reference to my confidential despatch No. 2 of the 26th October and previous correspondence regarding the proposed delimitation of the frontiers of Abyssinia, I have the honour to transmit to you a copy of a further letter from the Foreign Office forwarding a despatch from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa which reports that Ras Tafari has again recurred to this question.

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2. I have had no difficulty in concurring in the action which the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs proposes to take in the matter so far as the Abyssinia-Sudan and Abyssinia-Somaliland frontiers are concerned, but in the case of the Abyssinia-Kenya frontier I have felt that the terms of the Acting Governor's despatch of the 10th July and the tenor of the subsequent correspondence precluded me from concurring before I had ascertained your Government's views.

3. You will gather from the letter from the Foreign Office that the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs does not anticipate that the action which he proposes to instruct His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa to take will, in fact, lead the Abyssinian Government to undertake an early delimitation of the frontiers, or that the Abyssinian Government would be likely to give the guarantee for which it is proposed to ask. Even if they did so, it is thought that "the Abyssinian Commissioner would have full powers to accept, on his own responsibility and without reference to Addis Ababa, adjustments and modifications of the treaty frontiers necessitated by tribal or geographical considerations which can only be appreciated on the spot," would safeguard the position of the Kenya Government in connection with the Abyssinia-Kenya frontier. The main difficulty of the Kenya Government is, in brief, that the line which it considers necessary for administrative reasons does not correspond with that officially accepted by the Abyssinian Government, and this, it is thought, would be met by the proposed proviso which places tribal and geographical considerations in the forefront and lays down that the frontier is to be decided on the spot in the light of them.

4. I shall be glad if you will consider the matter in the light of the above remarks and inform me whether your Government would see objection to His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa being instructed as the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs proposes so far as the Abyssinia-Kenya boundary is concerned. It will, of course, be appreciated that if active steps for the delimitation of the frontier should result, it is possible that the Government of Kenya would be asked to bear the expenditure involved on the British side.

I have, &c.

L. S. AMERY.

(b.) Migration (Degodia and Boran).

[J 3008/1121/1]

No. 21.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received October 13.)

Sir,

Downing Street, October 12, 1925.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to transmit to you, to be laid before Mr. Secretary Chamberlain, the accompanying copies of correspondence with the Acting Governor of Kenya on the subject of the repatriation of the Degodia tribe to Abyssinia.*

2. Mr. Amery trusts that, in view of the situation disclosed in the accompanying correspondence, Mr. Chamberlain will feel able to make strong representations to the Government of Abyssinia regarding the position of affairs in the frontier provinces of that country as contemplated by the interdepartmental conference of the 31st July, 1924. He has been glad to observe that His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa sees his way to obtaining humane treatment both for the Degodia refugees on their return to Abyssinia and for any Boran who wish to make use of the wells on the Abyssinian side for watering in the dry season.

3. Mr. Amery wishes to point out, however, that the success of Mr. Bentinck's efforts in this connection will depend entirely on the personality of Fitaurari Ayella, and but for this factor he would have been compelled to take a different view of the proposals for the repatriation of Degodia. He would urge strongly that the time has come when the Abyssinian Government should be pressed to make drastic changes in their representation in these border provinces, so as to ensure that the local Governors will be humane men of high character, such as Fitaurari Ayella; and further, that care should be taken to see that officers who have been or who may be removed on account of their misrule shall not, after the lapse of a short interval, be allowed to return to the provinces, as has happened in the past. In this connection I am to invite attention to

* Not printed.

the case of Fitaurari Mashasha, which is referred to in paragraph 5 of the letter, dated the 4th July, from His Majesty's consul at Maji, a copy of which was enclosed with the letter from this Department of the 2nd October. Mr. Amery considers it desirable to draw attention generally to the evidences of abuse contained in the communications from Mr. Hodson which were enclosed with that letter.

I am, &c.

W. C. BOTTOMLEY.

[J 3008/1121/1]

No. 22.

Foreign Office to Colonial Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 21, 1925.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 12th instant, in which Mr. Secretary Amery suggested that strong representations should be made to the Abyssinian Government on the subject of the maladministration of the Boran Province.

2. Mr. Chamberlain is inclined to think that the return of Fitaurari Ayella to the Boran Province being designed to prevent further disturbances in that province, it would be best to postpone making any representations of the sort suggested by Mr. Amery until it is known whether the Fitaurari will be strong enough to put a stop to the brutalities of subordinate officials. In the circumstances, it would seem to be sufficient if instructions are sent to Mr. Bentinck in the sense of the enclosed draft despatch, and I am to enquire whether Mr. Amery concurs. If a recrudescence of official persecution occurs under the Governorship of Fitaurari Ayella and appears likely to lead to fresh migrations, Mr. Chamberlain will, of course, be prepared to instruct Mr. Bentinck to address a strong remonstrance to the Abyssinian Government.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 3203/1121/1]

No. 23.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received November 2.)

Sir,

Downing Street, November 2, 1925.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 21st October with regard to the maladministration of the Boran Province of Abyssinia, and to request you to inform Mr. Secretary Chamberlain that Mr. Amery agrees that it will be sufficient to give instructions to Mr. Bentinck in the sense of the draft despatch enclosed in your letter.

I am, &c.

W. C. BOTTOMLEY.

[J 3008/1121/1]

No. 24.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 269.)

Sir

Foreign Office, November 4, 1925.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 116 of the 21st August regarding the repatriation of the Degodia to Abyssinia, I transmit to you herewith copies of the recent correspondence on this subject with the Colonial Office.* The enclosures to the first letter from the Colonial Office have been omitted, as you are already in possession of the facts to which they relate, if not of copies of the papers themselves.

2. I consider that the departure of Fitaurari Ayella to his post will afford a suitable opportunity for a note to the Abyssinian Government stating that, on the occasion of the repatriation of the emigrants, His Majesty's Government desire, in the most friendly spirit, to urge the Abyssinian Government only to appoint officials in whom they can place complete trust to the province where maladministration and

* Nos. 21, 22 and 23.

brutality in the past have resulted in the flight of the oppressed to British territory and in recriminations between the two Governments. His Majesty's Government trust that the high hopes which they and the Abyssinian Government place in the integrity of the Fitaaurari will not be belied by events, and that a stop will be put, once and for all, to the oppressions of petty officials in the Boran Province, to escape from which the unfortunate inhabitants have been forced to take refuge in British territory.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3367/1121/1]

No. 25.

Memorandum on the Southern Frontier of Abyssinia.

THE Colonial Office have recently shown marked uneasiness concerning the Abyssinian refugees in Kenya, whose repatriation has been found necessary, and in a letter, dated the 12th October, asked us to impress on the Abyssinian Government the urgent need for restoring order in Southern Abyssinia in order to remove the root causes of the migration of tribes across the frontier. In deference to our arguments, the Colonial Office subsequently agreed to withdraw their request for immediate representations, but as the whole subject has a certain importance, which may increase at any moment if the friction on the Kenya frontier intensifies, it may be convenient to place on record an outline of its history.

The two largest Abyssinian provinces marching with Kenya are the Boran and Liban (Yaben). Disorders in these provinces have for years caused great anxiety to the Kenya authorities. The Abyssinian officials and soldiers in these districts receive no pay from their Government and depend on the taxes they can extort from the local tribes; in the process of collection they do not shrink from the most appalling brutalities. To escape from these persecutions the local tribes have from time to time been forced to flee into Kenya, the Borana leaving the Boran and the Degodia the Liban. Across the frontier grazing accommodation is very limited and water extremely scarce; the available pasturage consequently becomes a field for dispute between the original inhabitants and the new-comers. The Kenya authorities have thus been confronted with a dilemma; the interests of their own subjects demand the expulsion of the immigrants, but to return them without guarantee of good treatment to the horrors from which they have escaped would, except for grave reason, be an act of inhumanity.

For greater clearness it will be convenient if the two migrations, Borana and Degodia, are dealt with separately:—

(A.) The Boran Province belongs to the Minister of War, Hapta Giorgis, and is administered by a local Governor, who is directly responsible to him. The Boran tribe, who are a law-abiding and peaceful people of Galla extraction, are divided into two main sections, Sabbu (chief, Geydu) and Gona (chief, Guyu). The Abyssinian Governor of Boran is Fitaaurari Ayella, who, though Governor of the whole province, is only responsible for taxing the Gona section, one Fitaaurari Walde Gabriel being responsible for the taxation of the Sabbu section.

There are two general taxes:—

- (a.) An annual tax of 16 dollars a year per karra (100 head of cattle, camels or horses) or its equivalent in stock.
- (b.) A tax levied by the Minister for War on both sections of the Boran in equal proportions. This has only been levied twice, once after the Whollo war in 1916, when 1,600 head were taken, and once in 1923, when 1,000 bullocks were taken.

The yield of the general tax is applied to paying the salaries of the local officials. The chief officials, the Fitaauraris, have allotted to them the yield on 100 karras each—that is, at 16 dollars a karra, 1,600 dollars each (roughly a little over £200). Minor officials receive between 160 and 48 dollars as their share.

The tax in itself is not onerous, but the system of farming out taxation is radically vicious and results in abuses during collection. The Abyssinian tax collector orders the Boran owner to pay his tax on certain dates. If he cannot pay in dollars, he produces stock, supposedly valued by the Boran elders of the manyatta (village), but usually valued by the tax collector himself to his own advantage. The stock is then handed back to the Boran owner to hold until the collector requires it.

If anything happens to the stock in the meanwhile through robbery, pestilence, &c., the Boran has to pay his tax over again.

In addition to paying this tax, the Boran have to feed all Abyssinian soldiers billeted on them during the collection of the taxes or stationed at their manyattas as protection against robbers. Most of these soldiers appropriate a large quantity of milk, which they make into butter and sell for their own profit. Any official passing through Borana has to be fed on meat and milk. This system of purveyances is the subject of bitter complaint by the natives, as the feeding of the large retinue accompanying an Abyssinian official is a considerable drain on their milk and meat supplies, especially in the dry season. The Abyssinian soldiery, moreover, on the move from place to place do not scruple to rob manyattas of their stock.

At the three great Abyssinian festivals, Easter, Muscal and Christmas, the Boran have to provide bullocks for the Abyssinian officials. As well as this, at all times of the year they are liable to be called out for forced labour, and have to provide transport for any officials who happen to be travelling through their district.

As well as being preyed on by officials and soldiers, the Borana are at all times exposed to the violence of the robber bands, against which the soldiers are supposed to protect them. Unfortunately the soldiers are usually kept waiting too long for their pay, and in despair, far from acting as a defence, too frequently leave the wretched natives to their fate or actually join the robbers in the plunder. The higher officials, of whom the Boran do not complain, are not strong enough to put an end to the brutalities of their subordinates or to suppress the robber bands.

Some sections of the Boran tribe, migrants of an earlier date, now live permanently across the frontier in British territory. The Abyssinian Boran, being in the habit of pasturing their flocks at certain seasons of the year across the frontier, see their kinsfolk living in comparative comfort and labouring under no form of oppression. They are consequently disinclined to return to their homes, and, instead of driving their flocks back into Abyssinia at the end of the season, prefer to remain in British territory.

(B.) Unlike the Borana, the Degodia, who have migrated from Liban, are a warlike Somali tribe. History shows a constant trend of migration of all Somali tribes to the south and west. Somali immigrants only reached Jubaland some sixty years ago, and before that there were none in the area which is now Kenya Colony. The method employed is invariably peaceful penetration until a sound footing in the area is obtained, when a quarrel is picked with the inhabitants, and the warlike Somali defeats the more peaceful earlier population, who are enslaved, expelled or exterminated. As soon as Kenya took over the administration of the northern area it became clear that the Somalis, following their normal trend of migration, would oust all the weaker tribes, such as the Galla, unless definite steps were taken to regulate the movements of all Somali tribes. It has therefore been the constant policy of Kenya to prevent Somali migration to the west of the present boundary between Jubaland and the Northern Frontier Province, and a Somali incursion from the north into the protected area is greatly to be deprecated.

Conditions in the Liban Province have been very similar to those prevailing in Boran. In the former province official persecution was, perhaps, more rigorous and the violence of robber bands greater. The climate of the Liban is highly distasteful to most Abyssinians, and only those officials whose hopes of personal gain outweigh their dislike of the climatic conditions can be prevailed on to accept appointments there. All this, coupled with the instinctive desire of the Degodia to migrate southwards, has caused them from time to time to move in large bodies into Kenya. There the original inhabitants were the Gurreh, a tribe with whom the Degodia had always been on the worst of terms. The conflicts between these tribes were temporarily regulated in 1922, but a year later (August 1923) the local British authorities found it necessary to round up all Degodia refugees and their stock and escort them back across the frontier (see "Africa," Part VIII, Nos. 27 and 57). The refugees were then handed over to the Abyssinian authorities against an undertaking that they would not be maltreated in future.

This promise was only kept for a few months. The Abyssinian military commander, Ato Gabru, who had treated the remigrants justly, was recalled to Addis Ababa late in 1923 and replaced by one Lij Beli. This individual had been recalled from his previous post and sent to Addis Ababa in chains to answer charges of atrocities perpetrated against his people. He was apparently pardoned almost immediately, and through the connivance of another unscrupulous official, Lij Ngashi, sent to the Degodi country to relieve Ato Gabru. The wretched Degodia were once

more subjected to every sort of persecution and barbarity, and some 3,000 of them, with 30,000 head of stock, fled into Kenya at the beginning of 1924. The Kenya Government, confronted with the same problem as before, asked His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa to urge the Abyssinian Government at once to recall the brutal Lij Beli. As no satisfaction was obtained at Addis Ababa, except for the recall of Lij Ngash, the Kenya Government, in order to relieve the situation in which their own subjects were placed by the intrusion of so vast a number of migrants, were forced once more to recommend the expulsion of the Degodia (July 1924).

An inter-departmental meeting, attended by representatives of the Colonial Office and Foreign Office, was held on the 31st July, 1924, as a result of which it was decided—

1. To obtain supplementary reports from consuls in Abyssinia and from the Government of Kenya.
2. On these reports, to base representations to the Abyssinian Government urging the appointment of trustworthy officials in Boran and Liban.
3. If no satisfaction were obtained by these means, to lay the matter before the League of Nations.

Instructions in this sense were accordingly sent to Abyssinia and Kenya. Unfortunately, through an oversight, no action was taken at Addis Ababa on receipt of these instructions, and, without seeing the report from Moyale, the Kenya authorities were unable to reply to the questions addressed to them by the Colonial Office.

Meanwhile correspondence went on intermittently between the Legation at Addis Ababa and the Abyssinian Government on the question of the appointments to Liban and Boran. By May 1925 Mr. Bullock had obtained a promise from Hapta Giorgis that Fitaurari Ayella would return to the Boran by the middle of June and then do all he could to enforce proper administration and governance. As usual, delay supervened and the Governor did not proceed until later to his post. The Kenya Government had meanwhile arranged to repatriate both Boran and Degodia during October, the details for reception being decided on the spot by Fitaurari Ayella and Consul Miles. Mr. Bentinck therefore informed Hapta Giorgis of the arrangements contemplated, and asked whether the Abyssinian authorities would be ready to receive refugees and whether he might assure the Government of Kenya that reprisals would not be taken and that junior officials would not be allowed to oppress the remigrants. Hapta Giorgis, in Mr. Bentinck's presence, wrote a letter to Fitaurari Ayella, instructing him to receive the refugees, from whom nothing was to be demanded except ordinary annual taxes; arrears were not to be payable. Mr. Bentinck communicated these instructions to the Government of Kenya, and, in reporting the transaction to the Foreign Office, expressed the opinion that Fitaurari Ayella was the best person to receive back the fugitives and assure to them humane treatment thereafter. It remains to be seen if that Governor will have the strength and courage successfully to carry out the difficult task allotted to him.

On the other side, it has been laid down that the arrangements for the repatriation of the Degodia may proceed on the understanding that they will not be removed forcibly, and that the Secretary of State for the Colonies will be further consulted if the arrangements for voluntary repatriation break down.

Such is the position at present; there remains to be considered what measures should be taken to safeguard the future. On the Abyssinian side of the frontier administration of a sort already exists, though too frequently of a pernicious type. On our side of the frontier there have been military patrols which have been conspicuously successful in checking the progress of incursions from Abyssinia, but which cannot hope entirely to prevent such incursions in the future. A certain amount of civil administration in the Northern Frontier Province is being instituted, but the province is a vast area, largely barren, and only inhabited by scanty tribes which move their flocks and herds over the country, according to the state of the grazing and the position of the water holes. There can be no prospect of substantial economical development, and consequently there is little chance of any substantial increase in the expenditure on the province, which already amounts to about £40,000 a year.

The information received so far from the Government of Kenya does not clearly indicate what their ultimate views are for the future of the province. In 1924 the late Governor, in reply to an enquiry whether room could not be found for refugees from Abyssinia, stated that the only way of increasing the accommodation of the province would be by boring new wells, but the Secretary of State for the Colonies

considered that, while a programme of well-boring might be useful, it should be directed primarily to meeting the requirements of the tribes already in British territory. It is intended to make provision for expenditure on this work.

In a recent despatch the Acting Governor of Kenya has suggested that the best way of dealing with the frontier region is to cause the available wells along the border to be occupied to their utmost capacity, and to rely on the natural resistance of this maximum population to further infiltration across the frontier. The scheme does not appear to have any direct relation to the previous proposal for boring new wells in the province generally, and, indeed, it is obvious that the opening up of new wells on the frontier would postpone the time at which the frontier would be fully occupied. Also, it is not stated whether the additional population of the frontier region would be drawn from the south or from Abyssinian refugees. But the fact that in 1924 the reception of Abyssinian refugees up to the limit of available water was contemplated locally, and the further fact that the Acting Governor has now pointed out that if the Degodia are unwilling to return to Abyssinia their retention would be a first stage towards the filling up of the frontier region, seem to point to his looking to the additional population being drawn from Abyssinia rather than from any northward movement of the British tribes.

In the same despatch the Acting Governor observed that, if the Degodia remain, doubts exist as to the possibility of their remaining on friendly terms with the Gurre, and any conflict (which would almost certainly originate at the watering places) would be the first stage of the resistance of local tribes to new arrivals from Abyssinia, which the Acting Governor suggests as the sequel to his policy of filling up the frontier.

It is clear that the attitude of the Degodia to repatriation, whatever it may be, is likely to have a material bearing on future policy, but, apart from that, it seems desirable that the Government of Kenya should be asked to define more closely the policy which they have in mind and the steps which they contemplate for carrying it into effect.

As regards Abyssinia, it has been stated above that the climate of the Boran, Arero and Liban is distasteful to most Abyssinians. To get over this, suitable candidates must be assured of receiving adequate remuneration. At present the antiquated system of collecting taxes for the payment of civil and military administration leads to abuses. This could be remedied by the payment of salaries from the Central Government and by the regular collection of taxes to be paid into the Central Exchequer through the provincial Governor. Officials in the Liban and Arero have hitherto refused to acknowledge the authority of the Governor of Boran; in future they should be placed under his orders. To perfect the scheme, serious punitive measures must be taken against the robber bands infesting the provinces and scoundrelly officials must be punished, not pardoned, and never sent back to revenge themselves on the districts where their previous abuses of power have lost them their appointments. All this could be pointed out by His Majesty's Minister to the Abyssinian Government without exposing His Majesty's Government to a charge of unwarrantable interference in matters of purely domestic concern.

N. RONALD.

Foreign Office, November 17, 1925.

[J 3431/1121/1]

No. 26.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 23.)

(No. 178.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, November 2, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatches Nos. 90 and 175 of the 31st July and the 28th October respectively, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's consul at Mega regarding frontier conditions.

2. The Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis recently referred in conversation to the encounter with the Abyssinian guard, but I do not propose to take any further action at present. I trust that since the arrival of Fitaurari Ayella the situation on the frontier will have improved. I am expecting to receive a visit from Major Miles shortly and shall endeavour to arrange for an interview between him and Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis, should the latter's health permit.

I am forwarding a copy of this despatch to the Government of Kenya.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[14106]

C 4

Enclosure in No. 26.

Consul Miles to Mr. Bentinck.

Sir,

Mega, September 9, 1925.

I BEG to acknowledge receipt of your despatch of the 31st July, together with letter from Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis addressed to Fitaurari Ayella. Fitaurari Ayella arrived here yesterday and I handed him the letter. He expressed great pleasure at receiving it, as it strengthens his hand as regards Fitaurari Walde Gabriel. He is reporting all the misdeeds of this official and his underlings to the Minister for War. Fitaurari Ayella is determined to keep the frontier peaceful and is ready to help the British officials in every way to see this carried out.

Since June, Fitaurari Walde Gabriel has continued to hold all the border wells against all natives, both British and refugees, and to make himself offensive in every way as regards all frontier matters. Colonel Muirehead, officer in charge of N.F.P., arrived at Moyale on the 17th July, and ordered most of the refugees away from the frontier to Marsabit. Soon after that date Fitaurari Walde Gabriel ordered wholesale seizure of native stock. This culminated in a King's African Rifle patrol killing an Abyssinian soldier, which had an excellent effect, as since then Abyssinians have thought twice of touching British subjects.

During this period three of my escort were also set upon and badly beaten, in fact one of them sustained a fractured skull, by an Abyssinian guard. Fitaurari Ayella has promised to make an example of this guard and punish them severely.

I must thank you, Sir, for obtaining this letter from the Minister of War, as I am now happy in my mind that no more trouble over border wells will take place on the frontier.

I have, &c.

A. T. MILES, Major.

[J 3367/1121/1]

No. 27.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 291.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 24, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 269 of the 4th instant, I transmit to you herewith a copy of a memorandum prepared in this department,* after consultation with the Colonial Office, on the subject of the migrations from Abyssinia into Kenya. At the end of this memorandum you will see that suggestions are put forward as to the policy to be adopted with a view to preventing further undesirable tribal movements.

2. While I shall be glad to receive any observations you may wish to make on the points raised in the memorandum, I leave it to your discretion whether to take any immediate action complementary to that which you were instructed to take in my despatch under reference, but you should bear in mind the desirability of conveying to the Abyssinian Government, when a suitable occasion occurs, the suggestions contained in the last paragraph. It would be unreasonable on their part to resent such a communication on the ground that it constituted an interference in matters of purely domestic concern. His Majesty's Government have no desire to meddle in the domestic affairs of Abyssinia, but they are forced to watch closely lest the maladministration of the frontier provinces should again react unfavourably on the neighbouring territories under British control.

3. The Colonial Office, to which department copies of the memorandum have been sent, will no doubt obtain the views of the interested colonial Government.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

* No. 25.

[J 3367/1121/1]

No. 28.

Foreign Office to Colonial Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 25, 1925.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to request you to lay before the Secretary of State for the Colonies the accompanying memorandum regarding migrations from Southern Abyssinia into Kenya which has been prepared in the Foreign Office with the assistance of your Department.*

2. A copy of this memorandum has been sent to His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa under cover of a draft, of which a copy is enclosed herein.† While awaiting Mr. Bentinck's views Mr. Amery will, no doubt, desire to invite the observations of the Governments of Kenya and Uganda.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 3625/1121/1]

No. 29.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 14.)

(No. 192.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, November 23, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatches No. 175 of the 28th October and No. 178 of the 2nd November respectively, I have the honour to transmit herewith copies of three further despatches from His Majesty's consul at Mega, Nos. 50, 54 and 55 of the 5th and 19th October respectively.‡

2. You will observe that the Government of Kenya have decided that the Degodia cannot be handed back by force. In paragraph 3 of my despatch No. 175 I suggested that if, after having been handed back to the Abyssinian authorities, they should again be badly treated, and so return to our side of the frontier, to repatriate them forcibly after this would be undesirable. I had understood, as had Major Miles and Fitaurari Ayella, that arrangements were being made on our side to hand these people back to the Abyssinian authorities, hence my talks with Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis and Fitaurari Ayella, recorded in my previous despatches on this subject. If, however, this is not now to take place, it will be necessary for me to give some explanation to Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis, who has shown himself most accommodating throughout. In view of Kenya despatch of the 9th June, forwarded to you under cover of my despatch No. 74 of the 13th July and of your telegram No. 46 of the 20th August, I consider that I was justified in anticipating the return of these people, and that it was necessary for me to see that Fitaurari Ayella should take steps to prepare for the reception of the Degodia on their repatriation from Kenya.

3. It is satisfactory to learn that Fitaurari Ayella is anxious to co-operate with the Kenya Government, and that he has made a good start in his province.

4. When Major Miles comes to Addis Ababa I shall be able to discuss the whole question of these border tribes with him, in conjunction with Messrs. Zaphiro and Plowman, who are both acquainted with the district in question. If we are able to agree upon some tangible scheme for a settlement of the problems to which Major Miles draws attention in his despatches, I shall revert to the matter at a later date.

I am forwarding copies of this despatch to the Kenya Government and to Major Miles.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure in No. 29.

Extract from Mega despatch No. 54 of October 19, 1925.

I AM glad to be able to report that an enormous improvement has taken place in this province since the arrival of Fitaurari Ayella. Last week has been most interesting. Fitaurari Ayella called all the local officials and chiefs here and held a conference,

* No. 25.

† No. 27.

‡ Extract from despatch No. 54 only printed.

which lasted some seven days. Before holding this conference, Fitaaurari Ayella informed me privately of the measures of reform he was about to make. The reforms are the following:—

- (a.) That all taxes are to be gathered by the two chiefs of the Boran, Fitaaurari Geddo and Fitaaurari Guyu. These two will pay the taxes direct to Fitaaurari Ayella, who will be responsible for the paying of the soldiery.
- (b.) That no Abyssinian soldiery are to be billeted on the inhabitants, but in future they will be directly under Abyssinian officers.
- (c.) That in future Abyssinian soldiers are to be severely dealt with if they are found taking milk or meat from the inhabitants.
- (d.) All refugee Boran who have returned from British territory to Abyssinia are not to be molested in any way or taxed for three years, and are to be placed under the protection of Fitaaurari Geddo, the paramount chief of the Sabbu section of the Boran. I am glad to say that many have already returned.
- (e.) That no natives are to be molested at the frontier wells; all are to water at peace, whether British subjects or Abyssinian refugees.

Fitaaurari Walde Gabriel is being sent to Addis Ababa to explain his conduct to the Minister for War. Several minor officials have been fined for their share in the late trouble on the frontier. It is most gratifying to me to see these much-wanted reforms at last ordered. I only hope that Fitaaurari Ayella is strong enough to see them carried through. It appears to me that he has come back from Addis Ababa greatly strengthened by the Minister for War, and with the departure of Fitaaurari Walde Gabriel he will be in sole command of the province, which will ease his task considerably.

I have, &c.

A. T. MILES, Major,
Consul, Southern Abyssinia.

[J 3625/1121/1]

No. 30.

Foreign Office to Colonial Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 18, 1925.

WITH reference to the letter from this Department of the 30th ultimo regarding the situation on the southern frontier of Abyssinia, I am directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to request you to lay before Mr. Secretary Amery the accompanying copy of a further despatch on this subject from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa.*

2. As the whole situation has evidently changed considerably since last August, Sir A. Chamberlain proposes, subject to Mr. Amery's concurrence, to take no action before learning the outcome of the discussions with Consuls Plowman and Miles as to which, according to the penultimate paragraph of his despatch, Mr. Bentinck intends to report at a later date.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

CHAPTER III.—GENERAL.

[J 2562/1500/1]

No. 31.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 2.)

(No. 84.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, July 21, 1925.

I HAVE read with interest your despatch No. 103 of the 10th June last, and I am much gratified to learn that my predecessor should have drawn attention to the difficulties connected with the working of extra-territorial jurisdiction in Abyssinia. The question in Abyssinia presents, I fancy, considerably greater difficulties than in China, where there is a professional judge at Shanghai and where the British colony is composed chiefly of a well-behaved white community, with a sprinkling of Indians. In Abyssinia there are a great number of unruly British Somalis ready to murder each other on the slightest provocation, and whose criminal cases are far more serious and frequent than those of the even larger colony of Indians and Arabs. I entirely agree, Sir, that the situation as set forth in paragraph 3 of your despatch under reply is far from satisfactory.

2. In order that this important question might receive the consideration which it deserves from every point of view, I showed your despatch confidentially to Mr. A. L. Gardiner, a British lawyer who has fortunately recently come to reside at Addis Ababa, and whose help and advice have already proved of the greatest service both to His Majesty's Legation and to the local British-Indian, Arab and Somali community. In recommending Mr. Gardiner's views and suggestions to your serious consideration, I have the honour to point out that he has nearly ten years standing at the bar, he has already practised both in Uganda and at Aden, and has had sufficient experience in Addis Ababa to enable him to speak on matters about which he has a first-hand knowledge.

3. Mr. Gardiner compares the working of the other consular courts in Abyssinia and points out that the criminal work coming before those courts is very small compared with the amount coming before the British courts. He is of the opinion that, if appeals in criminal cases are to be allowed from the court of the consul-general to a court sitting out of the country, then the proper court is the High Court at Bombay. The arguments set forth in paragraph 10 of Mr. Gardiner's letter in favour of this would appear to me to be worthy of consideration.

4. I personally should rejoice if you, Sir, could see your way to sanction the appointment of Mr. Gardiner, the only British lawyer residing in Addis Ababa, as a kind of legal adviser to His Majesty's Legation, as he somewhat diffidently suggests in paragraph 14 of his letter. Against such an appointment it may be asked whether we are not justified in hoping that murder cases and complicated fraud or embezzlement cases will not be so numerous or complicated in the future as they have been during the past year. In which case the volume of work might not justify such an appointment. I regret to say, however, that I can see no reason whatever for such a sanguine hope. On the contrary, the serious tribal animosities which exist amongst the Somalis would not appear to justify it. I do not think that Mr. Gardiner would be exorbitant in his demands as to remuneration, and in view of the many very serious cases involved, I consider that a retaining fee of £300 a year would be justified, provided Mr. Gardiner could be officially appointed legal adviser to His Majesty's Legation and enjoy diplomatic privileges as regards customs duties in the same manner as the Italian doctor enjoys in his capacity of medical adviser to the Italian Legation.

5. Finally, I venture to observe that I am strongly of the opinion that the Minister (consul-general) or consul, and especially the latter, whose time is almost entirely taken up with trials and judicial questions of some kind or another, should, in the future, already have had some sort of judicial experience before being appointed to Addis Ababa. If, in the future, a consul with previous judicial experience could always be chosen, it might be possible to relieve the consul-general (Minister) of a certain number of unnecessary appeals by enacting that only appeals on really important matters be submitted to him. As matters stand at present, appeals on

civil questions are allowed when an action involves a sum of £25 and on any criminal conviction, except on offences tried by summary procedure, and not on a charge (penalty not exceeding £20 or three months).

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure in No. 31.

Mr. A. L. Gardiner to Mr. Bentinck.

(Confidential.)

Dear Mr. Bentinck,

Addis Ababa, July 16, 1925.

I HAVE your letter of the 15th enclosing despatch from the Foreign Office (which I return herewith) on the subject of the British courts in Abyssinia, and asking me to give you my views on the matter. As the subject is one of some difficulty, I trust you will forgive me if I deal with the matter somewhat at length. Although I shall touch on civil matters, I propose to deal mainly with the criminal jurisdiction of the courts, which is the matter in which, I gather, the Foreign Office is mainly interested at the present time.

2. In my opinion civil law is for the most part much more intricate than criminal law, and, moreover, it covers a much wider field. It is true that from time to time difficult points crop up in criminal law, but for the most part the important point in the consideration as to whether a person shall be convicted of a crime is a proper review of the evidence produced before the court, both for the prosecution as well as for the defence, and it is comparatively rare that the point arises as to whether the facts as proved, constitute in law an offence. But there is another point to be taken into consideration in criminal trials in countries where the accused is not properly represented by counsel, and that is whether the accused had a proper chance of putting his case before the court, in order that the court might properly consider his evidence. This is a point which I have constantly pressed in court, both in this country and elsewhere, namely, that in my opinion it is the duty of the judge to see that an undefended prisoner understands exactly what is charged against him, and what he has to prove in order to rebut the charge. Here, however, we at once meet with the difficulty that the less trained the judge is in law, the more difficult does he find it to protect the interests of the accused.

3. While, however, my opinion is that criminal law is not so difficult to administer as civil law, the fact remains that the proper administration of criminal law is of paramount importance, for while a civil judgment may deprive a man of his property, a criminal judgment may deprive him of his liberty—or even of his life.

4. I propose to consider first of all the working of the other consular courts in Abyssinia. In these courts, the court of the consul sitting in Addis Ababa has no greater powers than the provincial courts, in other words, there is no appeal from the consul to the consul-general (I know this is a fact in the case of the French court, and believe it is the same with the other consular courts). From the court of the consul an appeal lies to the Court of Appeal at Aix, Genoa or Athens as the case may be (I know this is the case in civil matters, and I understand it is also so in criminal). This appeal is a comparatively simple and inexpensive matter, as compared with an appeal to our Privy Council, regarding which it is a matter of common knowledge that unless about £10,000 is concerned, it is not worth while appealing. The disadvantage of this procedure is that it is a matter of a couple of years or so before the affair is settled. In my opinion, the British system of an appeal from the consul to the consul-general is preferable to the system of the other consular courts, as I consider it better to incur the risk of an occasional miscarriage of justice, which may be occasioned by the consul-general's lack of knowledge of law, and to get the case finally determined quickly, rather than to have cases drag on for years, while a court of professional judges sitting out of the country examines the matter. It might possibly, however, be thought advantageous to allow an appeal from the court of the consul-general in civil matters to a Court of Appeal (I shall deal later with the question as to which court this shall be) under some such restrictions as follows: (1) No appeals below a certain sum in dispute; (2) leave of the court of the consul-general or of the Court of Appeal necessary, in order to ensure that frivolous appeals were not allowed; and (3) security for costs to be deposited by the appellant, as well as security for the satisfaction of the judgment if he is unsuccessful.

*5. Before passing to criminal matters, I may mention that I have observed the working of the French court in civil matters, which court sits with assessors. I do not think it desirable that assessors should be summoned in civil matters for every case, but from my observation of the French court, I consider that in difficult civil cases, especially dealing with commercial matters, the consul would find the assistance of a couple of business men as assessors of a great help in coming to a proper decision on the matter.

6. Passing to criminal matters, I understand that in the other consular courts an appeal lies direct from the court of the consul to the court of the home country. I have no information as to how this system works, but I understand that the amount of criminal work which comes before the other consular courts is very small, as compared with the amount which comes before the British courts.

7. As far as I have observed, the majority of the persons charged before the British consular courts with serious crimes are Somalis and, to a much lesser extent, Indians and Arabs. Such cases are tried by the consul, who, if he finds that the case is of sufficient importance to be committed elsewhere, commits to the court of the consul-general, who tries the case with the aid of assessors, who are usually of European nationality. The decision of the consul-general is final, save for an appeal to the Privy Council, which is practically impossible in the majority of cases; and save for the powers of the Foreign Office to examine the matter in the case of a death sentence, and for the power of the Crown to pardon in all cases.

8. The Order in Council does, it is true, provide an alternative procedure, namely, the commitment of the offender for trial at Bombay or Aden. As the Foreign Office despatch points out, in practice it is impossible to make use of this provision, which would mean the very heavy expense and inconvenience of sending the prisoner, his escort, and all the witnesses out of the country, and, moreover, considerable difficulty might be experienced in making unwilling witnesses proceed out of the country to give their evidence, and this difficulty might well amount to impossibility in the case of witnesses who were not British subjects. In passing, I may say that in my opinion the administration of criminal justice in Aden leaves far more to be desired than its administration by the British courts in Abyssinia. In Aden none of the magistrates are trained lawyers, and during my stay there I observed that, with the exception of the first assistant Resident, Major Barrett, they appeared rather to glory in the fact that they were soldiers, and knew no law; and in one or two cases in which I was engaged I am certain that but for the fact that I was present for the defence, and insisted on the trial proceeding in a proper manner, there would have been a gross miscarriage of justice, by the conviction of the accused, in defiance of the principles not merely of law, but of elementary justice and fairplay. An appeal lies from the decision of the magistrates to the Resident (also a soldier). From his decision no appeal lies, but the Resident has power to reserve a point of law for the decision of the High Court, Bombay.

9. I have no information as to what is the course of justice in British Somaliland—I presume, however, that none of the magistrates are trained lawyers. Probably in serious cases an appeal lies from the magistrate to the Governor—also not a lawyer, and probably his decision is final. It may be, however, that he has someone on his staff in the nature of a legal adviser—but, as I have said, I have no information on this point.

10. It will be seen then that the Somalis, who apparently appear most often in the British consular courts charged with serious crimes, are possibly as well off in this country as regards their trial as they would be in their country. The Arabs and Indians from Aden certainly are. As regards the other Indians and Europeans, these, in their own countries, would certainly have greater facilities for making their defence and of appeal.

11. It may be considered desirable then that in certain cases an appeal should lie from the court of the consul-general to another court. But in what cases? It is easy to enact that an appeal shall lie on a point of law, but my experience is that in countries where the prisoner (often an ignorant man) is undefended and is tried before a lay magistrate, a miscarriage of justice is caused far more often by the prisoner not understanding what exactly he has to meet, what facilities he has for meeting it, and how he should meet it, than by the court going wrong on a point of law. When a Court of Appeal examines a case, it takes its facts from the record of the case; if

* While rereading this letter, I have noticed an error: the two persons who sit with the French consul are not really assessors, as they actually, with the consul, constitute the court, and their opinion carries more weight than that of a mere assessor would do.—A. L. G.

the injustice of the conviction lies in the record not having been made up properly, what remedy is an appeal? The conviction may be perfectly justified by what appears on the record, but the man may, nevertheless, be innocent, having failed to put before the court his defence, which might totally destroy the evidence of the prosecution. The great argument, however, against an appeal to a court out of the country is the fact that a great delay must necessarily take place before the conviction is either affirmed or quashed; and further, as an appeal always means expense, unless some method is allowed whereby a man without means can obtain legal aid free of charge, appeals will be confined to the wealthy, who usually are not the persons who commit crimes, at any rate murders in this country.

12. My opinion is against appeals in criminal cases going from the court of the consul-general to a court sitting out of the country; but if it be considered desirable that they shall be allowed, then I have a word to say as to what court they shall go to. In the Foreign Office despatch the full court at Alexandria is suggested—I suppose this suggestion is made because the jurisdiction in Egypt and in Abyssinia both come under the Foreign Office. I know nothing about this court, but it appears to me that Alexandria is not particularly accessible from here—as shown in the Foreign Office despatch the court does not often meet; and lastly, I imagine that the ordinary law of this court is not British-Indian law, which is the law of the British consular courts here. If appeals are to be allowed to any court out of this country, then I submit that the proper court is the High Court at Bombay, the usual law of which court is the law in force in this country in the British courts. By the Order in Council it is provided that an accused may be committed for trial to Bombay, and this being so, I see nothing unnatural in enacting further that appeal should go to the High Court, Bombay. A further advantage would be that in the case of a large class of British subjects in Abyssinia, an appeal would lie to the court to which it would go if they were in their own country. If it be objected that Abyssinia is under the Foreign Office, whereas Bombay comes under the India Office, I can mention a very similar precedent. Before the Court of Appeal for East Africa was established, all appeals from Uganda, East Africa and Zanzibar lay to the High Court, Bombay, both in criminal as well as civil matters—I do not know under which Office these countries came at that time, but presumably not under the India Office.

13. I am afraid that what I have said above will not be very helpful to you, but I have a further suggestion to offer. I am rather diffident in putting this forward, as I have to mention myself in this connection.

14. In most countries the authorities have at hand a properly qualified person whose opinion is available in case of need. In Uganda, East Africa and Tanganyika, for example, the magistrates who, in some cases (especially in the out districts), are not lawyers, are not only subject to the control of the High Court, but can always, when they require it, obtain the advice and assistance of the Attorney-General, who of course is a properly qualified lawyer. In Aden even, the authorities can always, if they so desire it, take the opinion of the Legal Remembrancer at Bombay. As I have said, I do not know what facilities of this nature exist in British Somaliland, but judging by other countries under the Colonial Office, I expect that the Governor has at hand some qualified person on whose opinion he can rely. In this country, however, there is no such person whose opinion can be taken by the consul-general. The desirable thing would be for such an appointment to be made; but probably the Foreign Office would consider that volume of legal work in Abyssinia would not justify the appointment of a special official. If, however, it were thought that a solution of the present difficulties might be reached in this way, but there were difficulties about the appointment of a special official for the purpose, then I would be willing to offer my services. My suggestion would be that I should be retained as the legal adviser to the British Legation, in the same way as a doctor is retained as the medical adviser, with this difference, that, if so desired, I would agree to give up criminal practice in the British courts, except as the representative of the Crown. I could then be utilised as the Crown thought fit for either the prosecution or the defence, or if it were thought desirable, in a capacity corresponding to that of judge-advocate in a court-martial. The duty of this official (who is a properly qualified lawyer, or else specially trained for the purpose) is to attend in court during the trial and, while not in any way usurping the functions of the judge or judges (who in the case of a court-martial are military officers) to help the court in every way as to law and procedure, &c., in arriving at a proper finding. My opinion would also be available on any other legal matters on which it might be required (excepting of course civil cases in which I might be interested).

15. As I only refer to this matter in case the suggestion may be considered useful, I have not gone into it at length, or mentioned any question of terms or of my qualifications. I may, however, mention that I have nearly ten years' standing at the Bar, and that early in this year I was offered a legal appointment under the Colonial Office, which, however, I declined.

16. I hope that in this letter I have not stated my opinion too dogmatically on the matters dealt with, but you asked me for my views on this difficult subject, and it seems to me that such views, if they are to be of any use at all, must be definite.

Yours sincerely,

A. L. GARDINER.

[J 2753/1500/1]

No. 32.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 21.)

(No. 91.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, July 31, 1925.

WITH reference to the final paragraph of my despatch No. 88 of yesterday's date, I have the honour to report on the many and great difficulties experienced by His Majesty's Legation and consulate in connection with the Special Court. An Abyssinian judge sits with His Majesty's consul and judges cases in which British subjects and Abyssinians are involved. In view of the very large British colony consisting of Arabs, Indians and Somalis, most of whom are merchants, traders, brokers, tailors, carpenters, &c., civil suits are extremely frequent, and criminal cases are not infrequent. Almost the whole time of His Majesty's consul is taken up with trials either at the Mixed Court or between British subjects at His Majesty's consulate. I am amazed at the number of cases. I sometimes wonder why any British subject ever lends any money on such doubtful security or sells anything to Abyssinians when he will probably never obtain his money. Yet, I am told that some of the Indians and Arabs are prosperous, and I am surprised at the large sums of money sometimes involved in their claims. On the other hand, there is a large number of Indians, and also Arabs and Copts, who seem to be in a chronic state of insolvency. Not to mention the Somali community.

2. The local British lawyer has sent me a list of cases in which he is interested on behalf of British clients. Fourteen of these are before the Special or Mixed Court, twelve before the British court of His Majesty's consul, one before the High Court of Appeal of the Ras, and eight before other courts, French, Greek, Italian, &c. The governor of the Bank of Abyssinia has furnished me with a list of no less than fifteen cases in suspense before the Special Court in which the bank is interested. There are also certain British cases in the hands of a local French lawyer, and a still larger number of small cases come before His Majesty's consul without a lawyer. Besides this, appeals are, from time to time, addressed to His Majesty's consul-general, and murder cases, of which we have two in hand at present, are naturally the concern of His Majesty's consul-general (Minister).

3. The judge of the Special Court was educated in Italy. He speaks Italian and French, but knows little about law. He would gladly hand over to another his arduous task, in which the Abyssinians accuse him of partiality to the foreigner, and the foreigner is inclined to suspect him of lacking the courage necessary to give cases against his own compatriots. He is incapable of keeping order in court, and I have already had occasion to draw the attention of Ras Tafari to the chaos about which His Majesty's consul and the British lawyer have reason to complain. Two days a week are supposed to be set apart for British cases, but owing to the irregularity of the judge's sittings, British cases are becoming congested. I have been pressing Ras Tafari and the judge to expedite a settlement, and have been assured that British cases shall be given precedence before those of any other country. When, after such assurances, and after several days had been missed by the judge, the Ras suddenly summoned the judge on a British day to attend a judgment at the High Court, I thought it time to address His Imperial Highness a note, of which I enclose a copy. The effect was immediate. The two following days were offered for British cases, and the case of the Somalis mentioned in my telegram No. 29 of the 26th May last was finally attended to. I trust that some advance in British suits will now be possible.

4. My French colleague tells me the only way in which he can obtain any satisfaction in this country is by continual pressure and the occasional gift of a

rifle. Both he and my Italian colleague, however, and indeed the judge himself, tell me that, although the judge may not be intelligent, he is honest and never accepts bribes, and that there is no one capable of taking his place.

5. Continual and systematic pressure on the part of His Majesty's Legation would thus appear to be the only remedy, and "these are," as Mr. Russell pointed out in his annual report for 1924, some of those "matters of which your Department seldom have occasion to hear," but which "are items in the work of this Legation which have a counterpart in few other countries."

6. When I was employed at His Majesty's Legation at Athens we had to support many British claims against the Greek Government. The claimants, however, mostly represented powerful British firms at home, and these claims were repeatedly brought to the notice of your Department and of the Greek Legation in London. The Greek Government were fully aware that His Majesty's Government were in a position to exercise very powerful pressure in support of British interests in a great many ways, refugee loans not being the least important. It is difficult to see in what manner His Majesty's Government can bring similar pressure to bear upon this country. Everyone knows that British troops will not march over the frontier to collect some millions of dollars for some Arabs and Indians, nor is the Government of Abyssinia as greatly in need of British financial assistance as was the Government of Greece during the four years that I was connected with that country.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure in No. 32.

Mr. Bentinck to Ras Taffari.

(After greetings.)

Your Imperial Highness,

Addis Ababa, July 27, 1925.

IT was with great surprise and disappointment that I learnt to-night that the Special Court will after all not be held to-morrow.

As your Imperial Highness is already aware, a great many British days have been missed over by the judge since I reached Addis Ababa, and on account of the very large British colony there are far more British cases before the court than those of other nationals. I have already had occasion to call your Imperial Highness's attention to the great delay in getting British cases settled, and I have drawn your special attention to some British Somalis whose case has not yet been attended to by the court. I will not conceal from your Imperial Highness that when I report to my Government that these unfortunate people have been in the prison at His Majesty's Legation for over two and a half months with a charge of murder hanging over their heads, and without their case having as yet undergone any investigation whatsoever in the court, this will make a deplorable impression.

I would be grateful if your Imperial Highness could give orders that a little more attention be paid to British interests at the court than has been the case since I reached Addis Ababa.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 2618/1103/1]

No. 33.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 8.)

(No. 95.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, August 5, 1925.

IN my despatches Nos. 46 and 72 of the 17th June and 13th July respectively I mentioned a new school recently opened by Ras Taffari in spite of the lack of sympathy displayed by the Empress and the Abuna. Yesterday His Imperial Highness gave a tea-party at the school in honour of the Grand Duke Alexander of Russia and of myself, as we had both expressed a desire to visit the school. I was invited with my whole staff. Before tea the class-rooms, dormitories, dining-room, &c., were visited, and the pupils conversed and read in French and English. After tea the pupils sang Abyssinian songs and the Armenian band played "Abide with me," one of the several pieces of music which I had presented to Ras Taffari for the use of his band.

2. The school is for boys, and was formally opened by the Ras on the 27th April, although the buildings are not yet completed and the boys cannot yet live on the

premises. The Empress and the Abuna did not attend the opening ceremony. Dr. Martin was placed in charge of the school. There were at that time thirty-two pupils; to-day there are eighty-one boys between the ages of 9 and 25; some are even married. When the building is completed it should contain well over 100 boarders. There are three French classes and two English. All the boys learn both languages, but twenty-four of them make English their principal language, whilst fifty-seven make French their principal language. French is taught by two real French teachers, one of whom has been temporarily replaced by a local Frenchman during his absence in France on account of the illness of his father. English is taught by two Abyssinian young men, one of whom studied for five years at the American mission college at Beirut and the other spent four years at an American mission school at Khartum. Their English is distinctly weak. Dr. Martin has no time to take the classes himself and is pressing the Ras to appoint a real English teacher to the school. At present, Dr. Martin says, the majority of the pupils select French as their principal language, as the French have for many years past been far more active in this country than the British, both in commercial, philanthropic and missionary enterprise. Until lately the Swedish mission was the only place where English could be learned. The American medical mission have lately started English classes for girls, and a Danish mission supplied with American funds now also teaches English.

3. The school is situated on a hill outside the town, near the French Legation. It commands a fine view of the surrounding country. It consists of three large buildings, one of which has been made into residences for the teachers. When the rains are at an end the boys are to learn football, basket-ball and lawn-tennis.

4. I consider that this enterprise deserves every encouragement. The difficulty will be to find the necessary funds for its continued upkeep. At present almost everything is paid for by Ras Taffari. I trust that before very long it may be possible for His Imperial Highness to engage the services of a real English teacher.

5. Dr. Martin's plans about a school for girls formed the subject of my despatch No. 78 of the 15th ultimo.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 2768/2019/1]

No. 34.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 21.)

(No. 117.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, August 24, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to report that a plot was discovered a few days ago to murder Ras Taffari and to put Lij Yasu, the rightful heir by birth to the throne, in his place. Ras Taffari, whilst making light of the affair, has admitted to the truth of the story.

2. It appears that an old lady, named Woizero Tsahai Work, a relative of the Empress and of Lij Yasu, and a great friend of the latter, had hired four men from the country to shoot Ras Taffari on the road to the American Mission Hospital, which he frequently visits. Ras Taffari's spies gave timely warning, and the plot failed. The old lady and the four men are now in chains, also Bajirond Woubishet, the Minister of Public Works. The last-named had already been in chains for the last year on account of his intrigues, and had recently been pardoned. He has now again been arrested for having heard of the plot and having failed to reveal it.

3. This story serves as one of the many proofs of the insecurity of the position of Ras Taffari so long as at least three claimants to the throne, Lij Yasu, Dejazmatch Taye and even Ras Kassa have a better claim by right of birth than has His Imperial Highness.

4. The Ras complains that he is greatly overworked, which I believe to be a fact, and proposes to go to the country next September or October for about four months. Meanwhile, the Empress has resided in church for the last two or three weeks, and refuses to come out or to occupy herself with the affairs of this world.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[W 8974/8974/98]

No. 35.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 21.)

(No. 123.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, August 31, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith some biographical notes prepared by M. Ph. Zaphiro, Oriental Secretary to His Majesty's Legation, on the members of the delegation which is to represent Abyssinia at the meeting of the League of Nations next month.

2. Nagadras Zallaka and Lij Makonnen are members of the Council of Advisers to the Abyssinian Government, upon which I reported in my despatch No. 69 of the 8th July last. They both called to take leave of me before their departure. I had met Lij Makonnen in Athens last year. He impresses me favourably, and is sufficiently emancipated to drive his own motor-car through Addis Ababa.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure in No. 35.

Names of Abyssinian Officers representing Ethiopia at the League of Nations.

1. The head of the mission is Nagadras Zallaka (Minister of Commerce). (See my despatch No. 69.)

2. *Lij Makonnen Indalkatchio.*—(See my despatch No. 69.)

3. *Belata Heroui.*—A very learned theologian. After the revolution in 1916 he was appointed judge at the Special Court of Justice and given the title of "belata" (professor). In 1919 he was a member of the mission sent to England to congratulate His Majesty King George on the successful issue of the war. He visited America with Ras Nado for the same purpose. Was also a member of the mission sent to England to represent the Ethiopian Government on the occasion of the coronation of His Majesty King George. He accompanied His Imperial Highness Ras Tafari to Europe. He was a member of the mission sent by the Ethiopian Government for the Arms Convention in Geneva this year. He has two sons at the Victoria College, Alexandria, one of whom is hoping to enter Cambridge University this year. Speaks a little English; honest and very intelligent. Lately he has written a book on the voyage of His Imperial Highness to Europe. Aged 48.

4. *Ato Wolde Mariam.*—Former interpreter of the French Legation. Educated at the French Catholic Mission School. Speaks French well. After the revolution he was appointed archivist of the Ethiopian Government by His Imperial Highness. Six months ago he was sent by the Abyssinian Government to engage, if possible, a number of Europeans for the service of the Abyssinian Government. Great friend of the French. Intelligent, honest and a trusty servant of His Imperial Highness. Aged 56. He was a member of the mission sent to the Arms Convention at Geneva.

5. *Tasfayei.*—Former interpreter of the French Legation and afterwards secretary to the Abyssinian Controller of the Franco-Ethiopian railway. Three years ago he entered the service of His Imperial Highness as interpreter. Was educated in the French Catholic Mission School. Speaks French well. Accompanied Ras Tafari on the occasion of his visit to Europe as an interpreter. Great friend of the French, intelligent and a trusty servant of Ras Tafari. He was an interpreter to Dejach Getachio at the Arms Convention at Geneva this year. Aged 30.

[L 4765/4765/405]

No. 36.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 22.)

(No. 100.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, August 15, 1925.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 60 of to-day's date, I have the honour to transmit herewith three volumes in Amharic of a book which Ras Tafari has just had published regarding his journey to Europe last year, and which he has sent to this Legation, with the request that copies may be transmitted to the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge and to Mr. Gaselee of the Foreign Office.

2. My attention has been called to pp. 90 and 91, which contain a summary of the conversations which the Ras had with Mr. Ramsay MacDonald regarding the frontier questions, Lake Tsana, import of rifles and a seaport.

3. I took the opportunity of a visit which His Imperial Highness paid me yesterday to draw his attention to the irregularity of the procedure of publishing these conversations without previously asking the permission of His Majesty's Government. I explained to him that there was nothing in these conversations of a secret nature which one might not wish to see published, but that, whilst I was instructed to ask his consent before certain records of conversations between himself and Mr. MacDonald were laid before Parliament, the fact that he published his account of these conversations without asking our consent was contrary to custom, and could not fail to cause surprise at home.

4. I have the honour to transmit a translation of the passages in question, which are, as will be seen, apart from the question of principle, unobjectionable.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure in No. 36.

Translation of Relevant Passages in Ras Tafari's Book.

ON (about) the 11th July, 1924, the questions discussed between the heir to the Throne and the Prime Minister, Mr. MacDonald, consisted of three matters:—

1. The first concerns the frontier. The Prime Minister stated that Abyssinians cross the frontier and enter British territory, and he requested that this should be stopped for the future. He said that strengthening of friendship between the two countries was fitting, but that frontier violation was improper.

The heir to the Throne replied: "We find the frontier question a difficult one. In our view, we consider that your people have crossed our frontier; we do not consider that we have crossed your frontier. In order that the friendship between the two Governments shall not be damaged by frontier disputes in the future, it would be a good thing if both of us send engineers to delimit the frontier."

When Mr. MacDonald heard this, he said it was a good thing and they agreed in the matter.

2. *Frontier Quarrels.*—The Prime Minister said: "Abyssinians cross the frontier and make quarrels with our people. Take action that these quarrels do not arise in the future. It is not only ordinary Abyssinians who raise quarrels in the Maji direction, but the actual Governors of the area. This restricts and does not increase friendship."

The heir to the Throne replied: "Our people tell us that English cross our frontier and raise quarrels with us. Your people tell you that Abyssinians cross the frontier and start quarrels with them. We have been having discussions for some time with the English Minister at Addis Ababa with a view to investigating the matter and finding out and punishing whichever side is at fault. We do not yet know if the fault lies with your people or with our people."

3. *Lake Tsana.*—The Prime Minister said: "As the Sudan Government is desert (hot country), and as the Blue Nile in the rainy season is flooded and the water descends and enters the sea, we have for a long time begged the Ethiopian Government to let us build a dam. Now we ask permission to build a dam at our expense and hold up the water, in accordance with the investigations of our engineers."

The heir to the Throne replied: "We will not permit you to build a dam and hold up the water of Tsana, but the Ethiopian Government will construct it for their own benefit. We will not absolutely prevent the water descending as in the past, and you will pay the fitting tax for the water surplus to what we use for our benefit."

After the Prime Minister, Mr. MacDonald, had finished his matters, the heir to the Throne, having asked permission to state from his side the difficulties of the Ethiopian Government, began to speak:—

1. *Rifles.*—"Formerly, in the time of the Emperor Menelik, an agreement was made that the Ethiopian Government would not be prevented from getting

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and importing its requirements of rifles; but now recently, since the beginning of the European war, we have been prevented getting rifles into Ethiopia. Will you permit that the entry of rifles be not prohibited to us in the future? Otherwise, will you tell us the reason, if any, of the prohibition?"

Mr. MacDonald replied: "The British Government alone will not settle this matter of rifles. The French and Italians are concerned; we will confer together and then notify the reply."

2. *Sea Coast*.—"As the Ethiopian Government have no sea coast for contact with the European Governments they are in a difficult position. Wealth and knowledge are obtained by Governments having contact by sea and land to increase trade and civilise a country. The entire idea of Ethiopia for the future is to advance to a high state of civilisation. Now, their entry into the League of Nations last year helps to indicate their definite intention to live in a civilised manner and improve their country, but unless they obtain sea coast it will be very difficult for them to realise their idea; and if the British Government gives sea coast to the Ethiopian Government as its property, I inform you of my belief that it will be a friendship which will never be forgotten. I should be very glad if you will give a definite reply to this before we leave London."

Mr. MacDonald replied: "I have not heard this question previously, but unless all the advisers of the British Government consider and settle in Parliament, I am unable to settle it by myself—I am unable to reply quickly. When possible we will notify Parliament and they will consider it."

[J 2753/1500/1]

No. 37.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 212.)
Sir,

Foreign Office, September 28, 1925.

I HAVE to inform you that I have had under consideration your despatch No. 91 of the 31st July last, in which you reported the great difficulties experienced by His Majesty's Legation and consulate in connection with the administration of justice in Abyssinia.

2. Although I fully sympathise with you in the difficulties which you encounter, I regret I can suggest no method of obtaining satisfaction from the Abyssinian Government except by continual reminders and occasional expressions of regret that it is not found possible to introduce more effective methods in the administration of justice.

3. In the last resort I presume that you can endeavour to concert with the representatives of other Powers whose nationals suffer in the same way from these judicial delays and address joint protests to the Abyssinian Government.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 2840/2480/1]

No. 38.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 127.)
Sir,

Addis Ababa, September 2, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to transmit herewith copies of recent correspondence with Ras Tafari regarding the frequent robbery of the mails of His Majesty's consul at Maji, and the murder of his mail runners.

2. I send you this correspondence just to show—

- (i.) The lawless state of affairs prevailing in the district between Jimma and Maji.
- (ii.) The inability of the Central Government to take any effective action, or to arrest the criminals.
- (iii.) The great inconvenience caused to His Majesty's consul by the constant loss of his mails.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 1 in No. 38.

Mr. Bentinck to Ras Tafari.

(After Greetings.)

Your Imperial Highness,

Addis Ababa, August 20, 1925.

IN my letter of the 27th July I gave you certain additional details regarding the robbery of the mails of His Majesty's consul at Maji. I now learn that two runners, not one, were murdered. Their names are Gabra Hanna and Gabra Kiros. I should be grateful if your Imperial Highness could see that the relatives of the deceased are informed of the murder. They were murdered by the Tishana tribe near Jamu, a village in the Tishana country. As the mail left Jimma on the 3rd May, the murder and robbery must have occurred a few days later. The Governor of the province is Dejazmatch Hapta Mikael. Though he told me a month ago that he was proceeding to his province, he is, I am told, still in Addis Ababa.

Mr. Hodson reports that this is the sixth runner murdered this year up to date, and although my predecessor and I have repeatedly drawn your Imperial Highness's serious attention to this lawless state of affairs, it is with regret that I shall be obliged to report to my Government that no steps whatever would appear to have been taken either to recover the lost official mails or to bring the robbers and murderers to justice.

I must again request your Imperial Highness to see that immediate steps be taken to recover the lost mails and prevent a repetition of these robberies.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 2 in No. 38.

Ras Tafari to Mr. Bentinck.

(Translation.)

(After Greetings.)

Nahasei 20, 1917 (August 26, 1925).

I HAVE seen your letter of the 20th August concerning the robbery of the mails of His Majesty's consul at Maji. I have already sent orders to Dejazmatch Woobei, Governor of Kaffa, to get the criminals arrested.

The reason why Dejazmatch Hapta Mikael, the Governor of Maji, stayed here is merely because he had been sick. I now ordered him to search for the offenders and do all he can to find them as soon as he arrives there. The moment I hear from him I will let you know.

(Seal of Ras Tafari.)

Enclosure 3 in No. 38.

Mr. Bentinck to Ras Tafari.

(After Greetings.)

Your Imperial Highness,

Addis Ababa, September 2, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to thank you for your letter of the 26th August regarding the robbery of the mails of His Majesty's consul at Maji. I am glad to note that orders have been sent to the Governor of Kaffa to get the criminals arrested. It is, however, most unfortunate that they should not have been arrested long ago for these incidents have been far too frequent and have gone on for too long.

I may remind you that as long ago as the 24th October, 1923, my predecessor brought one of these cases to your notice, and another on the 17th January, 1924. In a letter dated the 26th June, 1925, I made another complaint to your Imperial Highness and you then told me in your reply of the 28th June that the Governor of Kaffa had been ordered to investigate the matter. On the 27th July I had to bring to your notice two more cases of robbery of the official mail, and you informed me on the 2nd August that you had sent orders to the Governors of Kaffa and Maji to make urgent enquiries, and that you would let me know the result. Finally, on the 29th August, I gave you further details, and told you that six of Mr. Hodson's mail runners had been murdered this year. In spite of all these letters and of the orders which you have issued, it is my duty to tell my Government of the lawless state of affairs prevailing in the district between Jimma and Maji and of the inability, after correspondence lasting nearly two years, of the local Governors to bring any of the robbers and murderers to justice.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 2840/2480/1]

No. 39.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 224.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 6, 1925.

I HAVE to inform you that I have had under consideration your despatch No. 127 of the 2nd September, under cover of which you forwarded correspondence with the Abyssinian Government on the subject of the murder of the runners carrying mails between His Majesty's consulate at Maji and His Majesty's Legation at Addis Ababa.

2. I approve the terms of the notes which you have addressed to His Highness Ras Tafari, and I authorise you to inform the Abyssinian Government, as and when you consider most fitting, that His Majesty's Government have learnt with much concern of the continued loss of these mails and of the Abyssinian authorities' failure to take adequate steps to apprehend the criminals or to restore order in the disturbed districts.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3073/2019/1]

No. 40.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 19.)

(No. 130. Very Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, September 9, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 117 of the 24th ultimo, I have the honour to transmit an interesting memorandum by Mr. Ph. Zaphiro, Oriental secretary, on the history leading up to the present state of affairs in this country. Mr. Zaphiro begins his historical survey in the time of Lij Yasu. He explains the reasons for the unpopularity and consequent weakness of Ras Tafari, the intrigues of the party opposing him, and he gives further details about the recent plot against his life. Towards the end of his memorandum, Mr. Zaphiro says: "Ras Tafari will stay in power until he dies;" and again, "Tafari will never die by the hand of an assassin." In my opinion, it is always most unsafe to venture to prophesy. Some of the ground traversed by Mr. Zaphiro has already been covered to a certain extent in my recent despatches, but Mr. Zaphiro has gone more fully into many of the questions which have been merely briefly touched upon by me. Mr. Zaphiro ends his memorandum on a note of despondency, and I regret to have to report that this despondency seems to be shared by most people who have had some experience in dealing with this country. Only recently I saw in a letter from Sir Ronald Graham, a copy of which you forwarded to me; that the Italian Government, too, "found the Abyssinians hopeless to deal with." In this connection I may observe that when Europe speaks with one voice instead of three in this country, the Abyssinians may not be quite so hopeless.

2. My Italian colleague tells me that he found Ras Tafari distinctly depressed when he spoke to him about the plot. It is generally realised that some person of more importance than the old lady relative of Lij Yasu is behind it. My Italian colleague believes that Ras Kassa, who by birth has a better claim to the throne than has Ras Tafari, and who is guardian of Lij Yasu, is not unconnected with it. He has told Ras Tafari that he does not trust Ras Kassa, but Ras Tafari will not hear a word against his cousin. According to my Italian colleague, it had been planned that Lij Yasu should have taken Ras Tafari's place, but that the Empress should be left where she was. It is unlikely, however, that Lij Yasu would have remained satisfied with a subordinate position for very long. The whole of the north of Abyssinia, would, Count Colli says, side against Ras Tafari, but in spite of mutual jealousy His Imperial Highness could always rely upon the loyalty of Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis. The Minister of War, having taken his oath to maintain the Empress and Ras Tafari where they are, will, Count Colli says, keep his word until he dies. The Fitaurari assured Count Colli of this, and Ras Tafari is also aware of it. When the Fitaurari dies anything may happen (see my despatch No. 72 of the 13th July).

3. I found Dr. Martin most pessimistic about the general situation when I discussed it with him a few days ago. He said that if mission work were started

on a large scale and on distinctly proselytising lines, the priests would take fright and there would be a revolution. Mission hospitals and schools might accomplish something, but it would, he said, take centuries before any real progress were obtained by this means (compare my despatch No. 113 of the 22nd ultimo). Educational methods would, he feared, work too slowly. The Abuna and the priests were determined to prevent all progress in the country, for this would mean the end of their reign. The only hope, Dr. Martin volunteered to suggest, would be for the League of Nations to give a mandate over Abyssinia to one or more countries. This would, of course, be resisted and bloodshed would result; but if, Dr. Martin said, the mandate were given to two or three countries rather than to one, the Abyssinians would realise the hopelessness of resistance. If Ras Tafari had the power he might, Dr. Martin said, be able to introduce reforms, but the Empress would prevent this so long as she lived. Even when the Abuna and Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis die (the former is well over 70 and has chronic bronchitis, the latter is old and infirm) the Empress, with the support of the priests and the 5 million people who would back the priests, would still be in a position to block every attempt at advance. Her Majesty would almost certainly outlive Ras Tafari. There might be some hope, according to Dr. Martin, if the Empress were to retire into a convent and hand over the Government of the country to Ras Tafari, but there was little likelihood of anyone being able to persuade Her Majesty to take this course.

4. In view of the indiscreet remarks made to me in a private talk by Dr. Martin, I trust that this despatch will be treated as very confidential.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure in No. 40.

Memorandum on Abyssinian Affairs.

(Strictly Confidential.)

THE present condition of the Central Government of Ethiopia is totally different from its state in 1918. Lij Yasu, the so-called uncrowned Emperor of Abyssinia, the grandson of Menelik, and the son of King Mikael of Wollo, was loved by every Christian and Mahometan in this country; firstly, because he was the grandson of the Emperor Menelik, who, before his death, appointed him his successor to the throne; and secondly, because he was a strong, kingly looking youth, who was a great friend of the poor and an open enemy of the officers who used to oppress the natives like the Satraps of Persia of old. Unfortunately, following the instincts of his father King Mikael, who in his youth was a Mahometan, he started to intrigue with the Mahometans of Wollo, Harar and Somaliland. This caused the revolution and his dethronement, and the appointment of Zauditu, the daughter of Menelik, as Empress, and Tafari as the heir apparent. The Emperor Menelik's Ministers, together with the elders and officers of the Crown, held a council, after strong representations had been made by England, France and Italy, to discuss the misdoings of Yasu, and finally selected Tafari as the most suitable person for the position of heir apparent. Firstly, because he was the son of Ras Makonnen, and consequently descendant of King Sahle Sellasie of Shoa; and secondly, because he was an educated and intelligent youth. It was decided that the Ministers of the Crown and the elders should advise him to follow their Conservative policy and have him always under their influence. But they soon found out their mistake. Tafari, on taking office, had to put things in order, in spite of the enormous difficulties which he had to overcome. First, he caused a demonstration to be held at the polo-field, where the people asked the immediate dismissal of the Ministers from Addis Ababa to their homes in the interior. Secondly, he sent all the truculent officers, who used to be against him, to their provinces, with orders not to come back until they were called. He had to banish all the followers of Lij Yasu who remained in Addis Ababa after the flight of Sagaley and were continually intriguing against him, and he has gradually tried to reform the country by issuing new laws and regulations, and finally, after three years' hard work, he has succeeded in putting Addis Ababa more or less in order. But he has had to pay for all this. He has become the enemy of the elders of Menelik, who began long since to intrigue with the Empress against him and his Liberal policy in making friends with the Europeans and introducing European reforms, which in the eyes of the elders were not good for their country. Tafari remained unshaken, but unfortunately he was alone. He asked for and

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found a French lawyer, by name M. de Bellefonds, and he began to look for educated young Abyssinians. He found in the Legations and Catholic mission schools semi-educated boys who tried to help him in his difficult task. He took Ato Wolde Mariam and Ato Tasfaye, the interpreters of the French Legation, and Belatcho of the British Legation; in short, he is surrounded by Catholic missionary youths who, having found a better position under his patronage, try to help him. The priests began to murmur that he was a Catholic, and joined hands with the elders of Menelik and the Empress against him. They began to be tired of him and his reforms; there were occasions when it was thought that an open quarrel would occur between him and the Empress, but he was always on the alert and was ready to explain his action openly, and each time two or three of the principal intriguers were brought to justice, tried and chained up. In 1923 he began to think of going to Europe, but it was a difficult thing to do as many of the Conservative party were against it. He overcame all opposition by promising that he would ask the three Powers for a seaport and freedom to import rifles, heavy guns, &c. He said that as he was friendly with the three Powers he could obtain anything which he desired. After many councils of the elders of Menelik it was decided that he should proceed to Europe on a mission. The elders took good care to send with him Dejatch Gabre Sellasie, Ligaba Wodajey and Dejatch Moulugeta to watch him. His instructions were that he could discuss any matter which would be beneficial to Abyssinia, but he must not for any reason whatsoever sign any document or promise anything before he consulted the Central Government in Addis Ababa. He accepted the conditions because he was very anxious to visit Europe and because he was sure that he had only to ask a thing from the three Powers and it would be given to him at once. From the beginning his trip was unfortunate. Believing in the advice of de Bellefonds, he quarrelled with the British Minister and the Italian Chargé d'Affaires for not seeing him off at the station. He failed in Jerusalem to obtain the ownership of the Der-es-Sultan Monastery. The Copts, whom he believed when they saw him would give him everything he asked, flatly refused his request. He tried to obtain from the Patriarch Damianos a place similar to that of Der-es-Sultan in exchange for a number of gashas of land near Addis Ababa for the Greeks resident here to build a church. This also has fallen through because the Greek Government did not ratify the proposal of Damianos. In France they gave him a king's reception, but when he asked for a seaport and freedom to import implements of war, France replied that she would consider his suggestions and let him know. Italy has done the same. As for England, we know that he had a conversation with the Prime Minister which resulted in nothing. When he asked to buy rifles, after great difficulties he was allowed to buy a single rifle, which finally he refused to take. Since his return from Europe the elders have begun to complain about the large sum of money which he uselessly spent in Europe. He was secretly accused of going to Europe to show himself only, and that the Powers gave him nothing of that which he asked. In short, his enemies accused him openly of weakness and inability to administer the country. It was therefore decided that a council of elders should be appointed to advise the Government on their future policy. Three-quarters of this council are Menelik's people, and consequently the Ras can now do nothing without the approval of the new council of advisers. So the Ras is not strong, nor has he even the power which he used to have two years ago.

I am now in a position to give you further details about the attempt to murder Ras Taffari. When, the other day, I asked him to tell me exactly what had happened, he tried to make me believe that the whole thing was of no importance. I now hear from a reliable source the following:—

In April 1922 it was reported to the Central Government that Lij Yasu was living in the Dankali country since his defeat at Sagaley, and was in communication with Ras Seyoum, the grandson of King John of Tigre, who married Lij Yasu's sister, the daughter of King Mikael of Wollo. He could not refuse Lij Yasu anything, and it appears that he used to send him money and help him as far as he could. The Central Government sent a mission to Ras Seyoum asking him whether the rumours which they heard were true, and if so, would he, Seyoum, arrest Lij Yasu when he came to him. Ras Seyoum denied having anything to do with Lij Yasu, but news was coming daily from people who had actually seen Lij Yasu in Seyoum's house. The Central Government then became alarmed, fearing that Lij Yasu might, with the help of Seyoum, proclaim himself Emperor at Axum and march with the Tigreans against the Shoans. Yasu knew very well that when he approached Shoa, half of the Shoan soldiers would go to his side. The Central

Government, after many councils of the elders and high officers, decided to call Ras Seyoum to Addis Ababa. They sent letters to that effect, but Seyoum, pleading illness, refused to come. Finally, the Central Government decided to send Ras Taffari and Fitaaurari Hapta Giorgis to Wollo. Orders were sent to Ras Hailu of Godjam and Ras Gugsu Wolle of Gondar to meet Ras Taffari and the Shoan army at Wollo. All the orders of the Central Government were obeyed at once, and an army of over 100,000 soldiers was collected at Dessei (Wollo). Then Ras Taffari and Fitaaurari Hapta Giorgis sent special messengers to Ras Seyoum to come with Lij Yasu to Wollo. Seyoum, on hearing that nearly all the army of Shoa was at Wollo, and knowing very well that if he refused to go the Ras would march on Tigre, decided to proceed to Wollo with Lij Yasu. Both were arrested. Lij Yasu was sent to Salalei, and Ras Seyoum was brought to Addis Ababa. His country has been taken from him, and he is now a prisoner on parole. As to Lij Yasu, a special house was built for him at Salalei, and the Central Government decided that Ras Kassa, the most trusted prince of Abyssinia, should be his gaoler. The house itself was built by an Armenian engineer, who was sent with the Abyssinian mission to Lake Tsana. The house, it appears, has two ground rooms and one room on the first floor where Lij Yasu lives. Both the rooms on the ground floor are full of soldiers watching day and night. Lij Yasu, in order to go out, must pass through the two rooms. The outside room which leads to the door is the only entrance, where Ras Kassa comes daily and sees if everything is all right. He gives orders that Lij Yasu's food should be brought in, and when everything is ready, the door on the first floor is unlocked and a man announces that lunch or dinner is ready. The moment Lij Yasu begins to descend the steps, the outer door is locked, and the soldiers wait outside until Lij Yasu finishes his meal. The soldiers are Gallas of Salalei, and the most trusted men of Ras Kassa. It appears that Lij Yasu has written many letters to different officers and high-standing ladies, asking them to speak to the Empress about himself. He said he had done wrong in the past, but would she, his aunt, not forgive him. He did not want to be an Emperor, but would serve her faithfully if she, in her kindness, would forgive him as she had done to all the others who were the cause of his downfall, &c. One of these letters was found in the possession of Woizero Sahai Work, who had probably shown it to the Empress. How these letters are written by Lij Yasu and pass his guards, no one knows. Woizero Sahai Work is the daughter of Ras Dargey, the son of King Sahle Selassie and the brother of Haile Molokot, father of the Emperor Menelik. There was a rumour that Woizero Sehin, the daughter of King Mikael, and sister of Lij Yasu and mother-in-law of Ras Taffari was in the plot. This, when I asked, Taffari denied, saying that Woizero Sehin fell from her mule and was in bed at the time and that she had nothing to do with the matter. According to my informant, Woizero Sahai Work promised a well-known hunter named Mohamed Aba Shanko 1,000 dollars if he could shoot and kill Taffari on his way to the American hospital at Gulaley. This the spies of Ras Taffari heard and reported to him at once. Woizero Sahai Work was arrested, and when cross-examined she denied the whole thing. At the same time Mohamed Aba Shanko and three other hunters were also arrested, and when examined they admitted that they went to Woizero Sahai Work and told her that if she gave them 1,000 dollars they would kill Taffari for her. It appears she agreed. But before she paid the amount, the plot was found out. The hunters, under cross-examination, said that their idea was to take the 1,000 dollars and clear out of Addis Ababa; Woizero Sahai Work could not ask the money back, because if she did they would give away her part in the plot. I hear that the principal hunter is supposed to have said if they wanted to kill anyone it was not Taffari, but Fitaaurari Hapta Giorgis, who for the last two years has kept them here without food or pay. The next to be arrested was the Minister of Works, Bajirond Woubshet, who is supposed to have heard what was going on, but did not report to the Ras. A few days after two more people were arrested. Taffari Cherinat, the son of Fitaaurari Cherinat, a great friend of Lij Yasu, who died before the latter was dethroned, and Ato Daboch, who used to be a director of the workshops at the "ghibi" (palace). This man was taken by Dr. Martin in 1903 to India to be educated, or as a servant, which is not clear. He speaks English and Hindustani, and was an engineer of sorts in the service of the Government, but being an intriguer he lost his post through Taffari, who found him out, and he is now supposed to be one of Taffari's enemies. It is rumoured that there are many more to be arrested, and finally they will be brought before the High Court to be tried. As I said above, Taffari's position for the present

is very weak. When anything goes wrong they attribute it to him. Last year a demonstration of the soldiers and inhabitants of Addis Ababa took place. They asked Fitaaurari Hapta Giorgis to use his influence and stop the exportation of cattle and grain, as the prices went up and the poor and the soldiers were suffering. Taffari tried to make them understand that if cereals and cattle were exported to Europe an enormous amount of money would come to the country, and the natives would cultivate the land more and more. Fitaaurari Hapta Giorgis' reply was that the first consideration was the need of grain and cattle in the country for the soldiers and the poor, money was a secondary need. He won his case, and now neither cattle nor cereals are allowed to be exported from Abyssinia. Lately, his enemies blamed him for giving the Alcohol Monopoly to the Belgians. They said if the monopoly was a Government concern they ought to have it themselves and not the Belgians, who will pouch the profit, as Kevorkov now does in the Tobacco Régie. There is a strong party complaining against the Alcohol Monopoly on account of the rise in price of grain. They are advising all the Abyssinians to refrain from buying any spirit or liquors from the monopoly, but drink "talla" (beer) and "tej" (hydromele), which they prepare in their houses. For this, also, they blame Taffari. In addition, the elders of Menelik and the priests are secretly intriguing against him by going to the Empress and saying that when she dies her name and that of her father Menelik will die with her. The Throne of Ethiopia will then pass into the hands of Taffari and his heirs. It would be better, they say, to forgive Lij Yasu, her nephew, and have him back as the heir apparent, then the throne will remain in the same family and her and her father's name will be glorified for ever. The Empress, on hearing all this, is supposed to be much upset and to take consolation in prayer. Though she agrees with the advice given by the elders, she knows very well that if Lij Yasu comes back there will be a second revolution which will cost them many thousands of lives, as Taffari is not a person to give his hand to be chained up. He has a great number of true friends in Addis Ababa, and the army of over 60,000 soldiers at Harar will not see their master chained without a struggle. It is rumoured in the town that many high officers are in the plot, and some even go so far as to suspect the Empress and Ras Kassa, but personally I do not share the suspicion. When all the elders of Menelik and the high officers decided to dethrone Lij Yasu, they took a solemn oath in the Cathedral of Saint George to support Taffari and the Empress. The Abyssinians are fanatical Christians and very superstitious, they would never break their oath without some good cause. They have not yet forgotten the thousands of their relatives who gave up their lives at the battle of Sagaley, neither have they forgotten that Lij Yasu was the cause of it all. No one can openly accuse Taffari of being a traitor to his country or of having done anything which would justify the mass of the people in openly helping his downfall, and they know very well that they could not find another man who would work day and night for the good of his country like Taffari. As Abyssinia is a member of the League of Nations they are afraid of being criticised by the European Powers if they cause a revolution which might lead to a massacre of Europeans in the town and cause a conflict with the Three Powers, which would mean the end of Abyssinia. Taffari will stay in power until he dies. He is not a strong man, and the Shoans know it. He overworks himself for the good of his country, and his enemies try as much as they can to disappoint him in everything he attempts to do, and by this means they will surely kill him in the end. If they succeed, Lij Yasu will come back, but not before. Taffari will never die by the hands of an assassin. In this country the people look upon a king as the elected of God. They could have killed Lij Yasu many times over, but refrained from doing so because he is the grandson of Menelik. Taffari's biggest fault is his vanity. Lately he has been publishing an Abyssinian newspaper called "Light and Peace." In it one can see all his flatterers exalting him, saying that he is the saviour and the light of his country and never mentioning the Empress's name. Everything is Taffari. Of course, the old lady is rather upset.

In conclusion, I must say that, in my opinion, there is nothing to be done in Abyssinia with the present Government, and people at home must not think that Taffari is powerful or can do anything he likes. Things will drag on as they are now until some unforeseen events happen in Abyssinia.

PH. ZAPHIRO.

[J 3080/2019/1]

No. 41.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 19.)

(No. 143.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, September 28, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatches Nos. 117 and 130 of the 24th ultimo and the 9th instant respectively, I have the honour to report that the persons implicated in the recent plot against the life of Ras Taffari have been condemned to death by the High Court of Justice. It is said that these number as many as eighteen. Amongst them are Bajirond Woubishet, Minister of Public Works; Woizero Tsahai Work, the granddaughter of King Sahle Selassie; Taffari Cherinat; Fitaaurari Jema Demisso, son of the late Governor of Wolega; and others, including one general and three soldiers belonging to Fitaaurari Hapta Giorgis's troops. The sentence passed on Woizero Tsahai Work was that she should be burned alive in a sack soaked in beeswax.

2. It is considered doubtful whether the sentences will actually be carried out. Some people think that they will be commuted to imprisonment for life.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 3073/2019/1]

No. 42.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 243.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 22, 1925.

I HAVE read with interest your despatch No. 130 of the 9th September in which you stated your views on the present situation in Abyssinia.

2. As you say, the outlook is far from promising and the only hope lies in securing unity of purpose on the part of three Powers whose colonial possessions border on Abyssinia; to this end His Majesty's Government have always worked and will continue to work.

3. I shall be glad if you will convey to Mr. Zaphiro my thanks for the valuable and detailed memorandum which you enclosed in your despatch.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3213/160/1]

No. 43.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 2.)

(No. 149.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, October 9, 1925.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 169 of the 13th August last, I have the honour to report that the throne, which His Majesty's Government had promised as a gift to the Abyssinian Government, arrived here safely on the 25th ultimo, and was presented by me with befitting ceremony on the 7th instant. Before it left His Majesty's Legation, I had photographs taken and enclose two prints.*

2. I had the throne sent to the Empress's palace in the morning of the 7th instant in charge of the daffadar (sergeant of the Indian escort) and the servants of His Majesty's Legation. At the palace it was received by the Foreign Secretary, placed in a reception room and covered by a cloth. In the afternoon my wife and I accompanied by the staff of His Majesty's Legation and also by Mr. and Mrs. Plowman from Harar, proceeded to the palace. Some of the party drove in the garry drawn by four white ponies, and some of us rode. The mayor and the Foreign Secretary received us, and conducted us to a reception room where the Empress and Ras Taffari awaited us. After shaking hands with Her Majesty and His Imperial Highness, I delivered a speech, of which I enclose a copy, and in the course of its delivery I removed the covering from the throne. After my speech had been translated, Ras Taffari read the reply (translation enclosed). His Imperial Highness evidently spoke for the Government, although the conversation which followed was conducted by the Empress.

* Not reproduced.

3. We were then invited to seats, and champagne was served. Her Majesty asked various questions regarding the throne and the British Royal Family—particularly Queen Victoria, whose long reign evidently affords much interest to her.

4. After that we took leave and returned as we had come.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 1 in No. 43.

Speech by Mr. Bentinck.

Your Majesty,

IN obedience to the instructions from His Majesty's Government, I have the honour to present to your Majesty's Government this throne which my Government promised to send to Abyssinia in token of the pleasure which the visit to England last year of His Imperial Highness Taffari Makonen, Heir to the Throne of Ethiopia, afforded both to His Majesty my King, to His Majesty's Government and to the British people.

We see an inscription beside the throne saying that it is a gift from the British Government to the Government of Ethiopia. The throne surmounted by the Imperial crown is the emblem of majesty. In the carving we find the rose, the national flower representing the beauty and glory of England, combined with the lion, representing the great Ethiopian Empire. May these emblems prove an everlasting memorial of the friendship so happily uniting the Empires of Great Britain and Ethiopia, and may they inaugurate an ever closer friendship between both Sovereigns, Governments and peoples.

I pray that Almighty God may ever bless the Imperial occupant of this throne, and that God may grant long life and good health to your Majesty and to the Heir to the Throne, and that His favour may rest upon the Government and people of Ethiopia so that the land shall yield its increase and the people fulfil their divine mission in the world.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Addis Ababa, October 7, 1925.

Enclosure 2 in No. 43.

Speech by Ras Taffari.

(Translation.)

Your Excellency the Minister,

WE accept with pleasure this day the throne that has been presented by the British Government to the Ethiopian Government.

Her Majesty the Empress, who occupies the throne of her father, is, as your Excellency is well aware, anxious that the friendship between the Ethiopian Government and the Government of His Majesty should be strengthened, and she begs you to express her pleasure together with her thanks.

This token of remembrance of my visit to His Majesty King George V, His Majesty's Government and the British people will remain to manifest the tightening of the unforgettable friendship between the two Governments, and I find difficult to express my pleasure that I should have been the cause of the erection of such a monument to this friendship.

The throne which we now accept, and upon which is carved a rose which never fades, is a proof that both Governments possess Imperial crowns, and it shows us that the friendship of both Governments and people can never fade but will live. We would wish to express to you that this memento will give a permanent pleasure both to our Government and our people.

It is fitting for us to observe that you are favoured by fortune in having been the presenter of two tokens of pleasure during the short period of your residence here.

We now take the opportunity to pray God to grant to His Majesty King George V and to all the Royal Family long life and good health.

Addis Ababa, October 7, 1925.

[J 3214/3214/1]

No. 44.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 2.)

(No. 151.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, October 9, 1925.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 67 of the 2nd ultimo, I have the honour to report that my wife and I proceeded to Harar on a private visit on the 13th September and that I returned to Addis Ababa on the 25th September. In spite of the fact that our visit was not official, Ras Taffari was most anxious to do everything possible to make our "first visit to Harar," of which he is the Governor, as agreeable as possible. His cousin, the acting Governor, Dejazmatch Imaru, was accordingly instructed to supply us with everything of which we might stand in need and to show us every possible courtesy.

2. Thus, the Foreign Secretary saw us off at the station at Addis Ababa, and the chief officials of the town and a guard of honour and the principal members of the Indian and Arab communities met us at the station at Diré Dawa and escorted us to our hotel. The following morning horses and mules which had been sent from Harar were placed at our disposal, and the chief officials and a guard of honour escorted us part of the way to Harar. At Haramaya, about two-thirds of the distance to Harar (36 miles) the Ras had decided that we should rest for the night, and here an official from Harar met us and entertained us at Government expense and saw that we had all we required. The following day, about an hour outside Harar, three Abyssinian officers with about 500 men awaited us on the road and, in company with them and a representative body of Indian merchants, we proceeded to His Majesty's consulate. In the afternoon I called upon Dejazmatch Imaru, who again sent troops to escort me through a beflagged town, under a triumphal arch, with people lined up on both sides of the narrow alleys called streets to see me pass to Government House. His Excellency was most charming; he placed his horses at our disposal during the period of our visit, presented us with a bullock, a sheep, chickens, eggs, bread, Abyssinian costumes, &c. He had even proposed to entertain us during the period of our visit in the palace, which had been unoccupied for many years, but fortunately Mr. Plowman was able to convince him that we should be quite comfortable staying at His Majesty's consulate.

3. When I left after a week similar honours were shown to me. I thanked Dejazmatch Imaru and all the officials warmly for their kindness, and I added that I should not fail to report both to my Government and to Ras Taffari the great reception and the courteous treatment accorded to me on the occasion of my visit to Harar.

4. I should add that I took advantage of the opportunity afforded me to discuss with Dejazmatch Imaru three official questions with which he was concerned, namely:—

- (1.) The Hendesa raid, over two years old (see my despatch No. 128 of the 3rd September);
- (2.) The three Somalis whom he had sent up to Addis Ababa in May under accusation of having murdered some Abyssinians (see my telegram No. 36 of the 20th June); and
- (3.) The question of compensation to an Arab at Harar for the loss, through assault by Abyssinian robbers, of his wife, his eye and his property (three years old).

We did not advance much for, like all Abyssinians, Dejazmatch Imaru was incapable of assuming the responsibility of expressing any opinion, much less of taking any decision, and all he could do was to refer me to Ras Taffari, to whom he had reported all the matters under discussion.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 3279/1500/1]

No. 45.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 9.)

(No. 161.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, October 16, 1925.

I FORWARDED a copy of your despatch No. 174 of the 17th August last, regarding the creation of a so-called British local court at Dadar, to His Majesty's consul at Harar for his observations. I have now the honour to transmit a copy of Mr. Consul Plowman's reply.

2. In view of Mr. Plowman's explanation, I trust that it may be possible for you, Sir, to issue an order to enable His Majesty's consul at Harar to hold courts anywhere within his consular district, which, according to his commission, is the whole Province of Harar. The order, a draft of which I submit for approval, will have to be printed in London and sent to Mr. Plowman to be put up at His Majesty's consulate at Harar. The head of the British community should at the same time continue to hold unofficial arbitration tribunals where necessary. Otherwise the administration of justice will become impossible and local British interests are bound to suffer. There are numerous cases involving small sums of money, tribal questions, imprisonment of British subjects, &c., not to speak of the important criminal and civil cases, with which His Majesty's consul must deal himself. Dadar is four days distant from Harar, Jigjiga about three days and Dire Dawa only 35 miles, which have to be traversed on horseback or on a mule, there being no roads. To proceed to Dadar to try a case would be like going from London to Belgrade, with the difference that the latter journey would be the more comfortable. This will perhaps illustrate the difficulties with which His Majesty's consular officers in Abyssinia have to contend.

3. I should add that some time ago His Majesty's consul at Harar was requested by the Acting Governor to appoint someone at Dire Dawa to attend to British interests there. The head of the firm of Mohamedally has undertaken to do this unofficially. It is essential that some responsible person, or body of persons, should undertake this task and settle, in an unofficial manner at any rate, the numerous small cases through a kind of arbitration tribunal, appointed by the head of the community and approved by His Majesty's consul, as is done in Addis Ababa itself. It would be quite impossible for His Majesty's consular officers at Addis Ababa and Harar to cope with the volume of work unless some other body were able to attend to the minor cases. When Mr. Plowman visits the above-mentioned places he can always hold a court, as he has done hitherto, and deal with the more serious cases and those which can permit of delay.

4. British subjects and British-protected persons are so increasingly numerous and communication so difficult in this country that it is essential that authority, even if unofficial, be deputed to local personages as far as possible. Last week, for instance, when I was returning from Harar, deputations of British Somalis waited upon me at Aldem (between Dire Dawa and Hawash) and at the latter place (a day's journey by train from Dire Dawa or Addis Ababa). They complained that they were being bullied by the Abyssinians. I advised all to register and to report immediately to His Majesty's consul when in trouble. At Hawash, the head man of the firm of Mohamedally kindly undertook personally to attend to local cases and to report to His Majesty's consul whenever the latter's intervention was required. The distance, of course, makes it difficult for poor Somalis to register at His Majesty's consulate.

I am forwarding copies of this despatch to Berbera and Harar.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 1 in No. 45.

Consul Plowman to Mr. Bentinck.

Sir,

Harar, September 12, 1925.

WITH reference to Foreign Office despatch No. 174 of the 17th ultimo, of which a copy was forwarded to me for my observations, I have the honour to inform you that the local court created at Dadar does not pretend to be a court in the real sense of the term.

2. Similar institutions are in existence at Harar, Dire Dawa and Jigjiga. A leading Indian merchant is in each case president of what amounts to an arbitration tribunal. These courts have no official standing and no legal powers; they levy no

fees and inflict no punishments, but they are instrumental in settling many small disputes between British subjects brought before them. They have no right of intervention in mixed cases, but the court at Dire Dawa is now so long established that the president has often been able to obtain unaided the release of British subjects imprisoned by the local Government, and Abyssinian complainants sometimes go to him rather than to their own judge when they have disputes with our people. Moreover, the fact that there is someone in these places who is, however vaguely, connected with the consulate tends to circumscribe the activities of the more irresponsible Abyssinian officials in their treatment of British subjects.

3. The court at Dadar was formed on the same principle, and the president was given authority to do what he could towards settling inter-British cases. No intervention was permitted in mixed cases from the commencement, but my idea was to see how the scheme worked in a new place, and then, if the president acquired influence with the local authorities, the question of allowing him to take action in mixed cases would be considered. The position at Dadar is difficult, as the village and its neighbourhood are regarded as the private estate of Princess Manan. The officials are inclined to consider themselves as answerable only to Her Highness, and they almost question the right of Dejazmach Imaru to give them orders. Ato Kallalla seems to be a quarrelsome individual, and, if things do not go smoothly, I shall have no hesitation in abolishing the court, as I do not think the need for it was ever really pressing.

4. I gather from the last paragraph of the above-quoted despatch that the only place in which I am entitled to hold court is at Harar, whereas I have always considered that, as my commission gave me jurisdiction throughout the Harar Province, I could hold my court at any place within that area. This was also the view held by my predecessors, and we have regularly visited Dire Dawa and Jigjiga for such purposes. Much avoidable delay and expense would be incurred by British subjects if they had to bring all their cases, especially mixed cases, to Harar for settlement.

5. I should be glad to receive your instructions on this point and also to be informed whether I am to make any change in the procedure laid down for dealing with mixed cases, in view of the ruling given in this same despatch that "in such cases British consular courts in Abyssinia have no jurisdiction, even though the defendant be a British subject."

I have, &c.

C. H. F. PLOWMAN.

Enclosure 2 in No. 45.

Draft Order.

IN virtue of the powers given me under article 10, paragraph 2, of "The Abyssinian Order in Council, 1913," I, Charles Henry Bentinck, Companion of the Most Distinguished Order of Saint Michael and Saint George, His Britannic Majesty's consul-general for Abyssinia, hereby constitute and appoint that provincial courts may be held by His Majesty's consul for the Province of Harar at such places within the aforesaid province as may from time to time appear to be necessary and desirable.

Given under my hand and seal this day of , 1925.

C. H. BENTINCK,

H.B.M. Minister and Consul-General
for Abyssinia.

[J 3365/3365/1]

No. 46.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 17.)

(No. 93.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, November 17, 1925.

FRENCH Minister informs me that Turkish Chargé d'Affaires is about to be appointed to Addis Ababa. *Agrément* is believed already to have been accepted for Munir Bey at present at Kabul.

[J 3365/3365/1]

No. 47.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Lindsay (Constantinople).

(No. 1141.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 27, 1925.

I ENCLOSE herein a copy of a telegram* from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa regarding the possibility of the appointment of a Turkish representative at that capital.

2. I presume that the Munir Bey mentioned by Mr. Bentinck is not identical with the gentleman of that name referred to in Mr. Henderson's despatch No. 99 of the 6th February, 1924, who, as legal adviser to the Turkish Ministry for Foreign Affairs, is well known to this Department. I shall be glad if your Excellency will furnish me with any information which may be at your disposal regarding the Munir Bey stated to be at Kabul. At the same time I shall be glad to learn whether you have heard anything of the proposed appointment and the reasons prompting the Turkish Government to desire to maintain a representative in Abyssinia.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3565/681/1]

No. 48.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 7.)

(No. 186.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, November 16, 1925.

WITH reference to my telegram No. 92 of the 13th instant regarding the three British Somalis whom Ras Tafari has sentenced to death for murder, I have the honour to submit to you a full report on the whole case, and to enclose the following documents bearing on the subject:—

- (1.) Mr. Plowman's despatch to Berbera No. 12 of the 18th March, 1925.
- (2.) Mr. Plowman's despatch to His Majesty's Legation No. 24 of the 5th May, 1925.
- (3.) Mr. Plowman's despatch to His Majesty's Legation No. 31 of the 26th May, 1925.
- (4.) My despatch to Mr. Plowman of the 15th June, 1925.
- (5.) Mr. Plowman's telegraphic reply of the 20th June, 1925.
- (6.) Translation of proceedings at Harrar (the so-called "charge").
- (7.) Mr. Bullock's notes on hearing in Special Court of the 31st July, 1925.
- (8.) Letter from the judge of the Special Court to Ras Tafari of the 1st August, 1925.
- (9.) Judgment of Ras Tafari, dated the 11th November, 1925.
- (10.) My letter to Ras Tafari of the 14th November, 1925.
- (11.) Mr. Gardiner's memorandum on the whole case of the 14th November, 1925.
- (12.) Mr. Home's note of the 17th November, 1925.

2. The three accused were sent to Addis Ababa from Harrar last May, before my arrival here, Talan Sharmaki and Ahmed Hurwa having been sent under escort from His Majesty's consulate, Harrar, direct to His Majesty's Legation. The third, Durdah Samantar, claiming to be a British Gadabursi, was brought, after I had requested the Ras to hand him over, to His Majesty's consul at Addis Ababa.

3. On the receipt of your telegram No. 25 of the 10th June last, I instructed His Majesty's consul to engage a lawyer to defend these people and to arrange for an early trial of their case before the Mixed Court. The delays and obstructions were in accordance with the traditions of this country. Firstly, the accusers did not appear, and then there was no charge. When this was pressed for, I was told it was in the hands of the Abyssinian judge, and he refused to give it to the counsel for the defence, stating that he would only give it to His Majesty's consul. After this, the judge could not attend to business as his wife and family were going abroad; next he had to take them to Jibuti, and in his absence no one was competent to give the charge to His Majesty's consul. After the return of the judge, he fell out with His Majesty's consul and thus obtained a further excuse for delaying the

* No. 46.

settlement of British cases. When the "charge" was finally obtained and translated by His Majesty's consul, it appeared not to be a charge at all, but simply a letter from Dejazmatch Imaru, Deputy Governor of Harrar, to Ras Tafari, reporting on the case (Enclosure 6). After further pressure on my part, the judge finally requested His Majesty's consul to bring the prisoners to the Special Court, but no witnesses could be produced against them, and no evidence beyond Dejazmatch Imaru's letter. This was finally reported to the Ras in a letter from the judge, dated the 1st August, 1925 (Enclosure 8). Subsequently, a Russian Jew, who practises as a pleader here, appeared in court and stated that he was to defend the prisoners. As, however, the English barrister had already been selected for this task, the Russian presumed that his instructions were intended to be interpreted in the opposite sense to that in which they had been issued, and so, in the Ras's High Court, he conducted the case against the accused!

4. The accused pleaded not guilty, declaring that the previous confessions made by them at Jigjiga had been made under compulsion. The two, Talan Sharmaki and Ahmed Hurwa, however, according to Mr. Plowman, had at Harrar repeated their previous confession before Dejazmatch Imaru and himself, whilst Durdah Samantar there withdrew his original confession. According to the two first-named, they did not repeat at Harrar their original confession given under compulsion, but at Harrar they had merely stated in answer to a question, what they had said at Jigjiga. Owing to the possibility of indifferent interpretation from Somali into Amharic, there is no reason to suppose that the translation of what the accused said was very accurate. The accused showed the counsel for the defence marks of blows still on their bodies, and one of them stated that he had been obliged to consult a doctor in Harrar Province owing to injuries received to one of his ears. As Dejazmatch Imaru was not competent to judge a murder case, he had sent the prisoners to Addis Ababa, and as no case could be proved against them at the Special Court, the matter was referred to the High Court of the Ras.

5. I continually reminded the Ras both verbally and in writing that it was not fair to keep the prisoners chained up without a trial. He replied that he was awaiting further details from Dejazmatch Imaru. The latter, however, declared that he had supplied the Ras with full details in the first instance. This, I may remark, is not the only instance which has come to my knowledge of different stories being told to us by the Ras and by his cousin Dejazmatch Imaru. Of the two, I think the Dejazmatch is nearer the truth.

6. Finally, the Ras agreed to hear the case, and invited me to send His Majesty's consul to attend. The case was heard once before the Ras in the presence of Mr. A. D. Home. No witnesses were produced to give evidence against the accused, neither were the accused called upon to enter upon their defence. The confessions alleged to have been made at Jigjiga and Harrar were not proved in the High Court.

7. On the 7th November I asked the Ras when his judgment might be expected. He smiled, and appeared to be about to tell me something pleasant, but was prevented by his Foreign Secretary. He then said that I should receive the answer the following Tuesday. Great was my horror and amazement to receive on the Wednesday, the 11th November, the judgment, of which I enclose a translation (Enclosure 9). I certainly had not anticipated the death sentence.

8. You will notice that the Ras bases his judgment upon—

- (1.) The confessions made by the prisoners before they came to Addis Ababa;
- (2.) The fact that His Majesty's consul at Harrar had tried originally to settle the question by blood-money, thus, as the Ras alleges, himself admitting that he believed in the guilt of the prisoners; and
- (3.) That I had myself condemned a Somali to death (see my despatch No. 97 of the 6th August).

9. As regards point (1), I enclose a memorandum by Mr. A. L. Gardiner on the subject, and I trust that all the details which I now forward will enable your legal advisers to decide how far such confessions can be counted as relevant evidence or conclusive evidence.

10. As regards the point raised by Mr. Gardiner as to the functions of the various courts, it is clear from Article 7 of the Klobukowsky Treaty of the 10th January, 1908, that a court consisting of an Abyssinian magistrate and a consul has to try every case. The Special Court at Addis Ababa did not exist at the time of the treaty. Dejazmatch Imaru, however, according to Mr. Plowman's despatch No. 24, had no power to try a murder case. It was therefore sent to the Special

[14106]

E

Court at Addis Ababa, where the consul and the judge *agreed* that the case was not proved, and so the judge referred it to the Ras. It may be questioned whether this in accordance with the treaty. It is certainly in accordance with custom for judge at the Special Court would never dare either to convict or to acquit in a murder case in which the accused is the foreigner.

11. I cannot believe that Mr. Plowman's attempt mentioned in (2) to settle the matter in accordance with local custom can be taken as evidence sufficient to condemn these people to death (see his own views on the subject mentioned in his despatch No. 31 of May 26th).

12. I think that (3) does not affect the question of conviction.

13. I may here mention that in a recent case concerning French Somalis, which was very similar to the present one, the Ras had sent to consult my French colleague before pronouncing judgment. As there was only one witness, the French Minister explained that this was not sufficient according to French law, and recommended expulsion from Abyssinian territory. The Ras pronounced judgment accordingly. The French Minister has consented to my making use of this precedent in speaking to the Ras. In the present case I was not consulted. The trial before the Ras, according to Mr. Home and the counsel for the defence, was a farce, and I consider the conviction to be a gross miscarriage of justice, as the accused have certainly not been proved guilty. I can learn of no case of Abyssinians ever having been executed for the murder of many Somalis. Usually, we are told, the murderers "cannot be found." No punishment has yet been inflicted for the murder of the Somali at Hendesa (my despatch No. 185) nor for the murder of the two Somalis at Hawash (my despatch No. 180). In the case of the massacre of Somalis at Diré Dawa, compensation in money was paid by the Abyssinian Government (Major Dodds's despatch No. 108 of the 25th August, 1922).

14. As regards the demand that I should hand the accused over for execution here, the French and Italian Ministers agree with me that I must on no account yield, and they have both promised me their support in resisting this demand. The Italian Minister considers such a demand to be almost insulting, as it is contrary to long-established custom, although it may be argued that there is no written document agreeing to the representative of a foreign country sending prisoners abroad when under sentence of death. Article 7, final paragraph of the Klobukowsky Treaty of the 10th January, 1908, merely states that criminals, when arrested, shall be handed over to the French consul. Custom, however, may have confirmed the natural inference that the French consul would never hand them back for execution of the sentence in Abyssinia, whatever its nature. At this moment my Italian colleague has in his compound an Italian subject accused of having murdered an Abyssinian woman. The trial has not yet taken place, but Count Colli is quite determined never to hand his charge over to the Abyssinian authorities whatever the final sentence may be. According to Count Colli the present attitude of the Ras can be explained by his fear of being accused of carrying out a pro-British policy. Such an accusation would be sufficient to cause him to take the first opportunity to alter his attitude towards me. The language used to me by Dr. Martin and Belata Heroui, as reported in my despatches Nos. 179 and 181, leads me to think that they were both aware of definite anti-British intrigues.

15. I told the Ras in my letter of the 14th November (copy enclosed) that I am submitting the whole case to His Majesty's Government, and that pending the receipt of your reply the prisoners will remain in my custody. I am inclined to think that this will be a test case. The Ras having mistaken amiability for weakness has, perhaps, thought that I should be prepared to go to any length to avoid a collision with him. I hear that he was much annoyed at receiving my letter, and my Italian colleague has told him that I was *très chagriné* at receiving his. He has now unburdened himself to Mr. C. F. Rey with a view to repetition to me, and I have told Mr. Rey, with a view to repetition to the Ras, how greatly shocked I have been at the Ras's judgment, which no court in Europe could uphold. When Mr. Zaphiro applied two days ago for an audience with the Empress, in order to return certain pictures and a book about Queen Victoria which Her Majesty had sent me to look at, the Foreign Secretary took alarm lest the object of Mr. Zaphiro's visit might be connected with the sentence on the three Somalis.

16. Your legal advisers will, I hope, Sir, be in a position to judge whether the sentence is a just one or not. If they agree with me that its execution would be a miscarriage of justice, then I submit that in no circumstances can it be carried out. Whatever the consequences may be, whatever measures of retaliation the

Abyssinians may threaten to resort to, I hold that British justice can never consent to an unjust deed, and that questions of policy may not weigh in the scale with justice. I trust you will authorise me to resist the demand for the prisoners' surrender to the uttermost. I am conscious of the fact that a serious situation may arise, and it may be argued that the lives of three Somalis, who possibly committed a murder, are not worth it. As, however, there are in this country thousands of British Somalis, Indians and Arabs, who look to His Majesty's Minister for their safety, I feel that weakness on our part would be criminal, and would entail far-reaching and serious consequences in the future.

17. I propose, after receiving your instructions, which I should be grateful to receive by telegram, still to endeavour by every possible means to work for a friendly settlement, using the case of the commutation of the sentence on Mahmoud Furi (your despatch No. 213) and the case of the French Somalis as precedents. I shall try to obtain the agreement of the Abyssinian Government to their expulsion, and then get the prisoners sent under escort to Aden or Somaliland. The threat of direct representations to the Empress may prove a useful weapon, and I feel sure that I can count upon the support of my French and Italian colleagues. I am hopeful that, with definite instructions from you forbidding me to allow the sentence to be carried out, I shall be able in the end to reach an agreement for the prisoners' expulsion from Abyssinia. I feel, however, that I must be prepared to be adamant, and I rely upon you, Sir, to give me the whole-hearted support of His Majesty's Government.

18. In view of the gravity of the task before me, I trust that the difficulties raised in your telegram No. 48 of the 24th August regarding the despatch of the prisoners to Aden or Somaliland may be immediately settled or waived, as we cannot afford to allow comparatively trifling matters to endanger our whole case.

19. I should add that on receipt of the judgment better precautions were immediately taken, so as to secure the safety of the prisoners in the compound.

20. The present instance serves to prove all the more the necessity of the appointment of a proper court of appeal with a European judge, to which Mr. Ramsay MacDonald drew the attention of the Ras, as recorded in Foreign Office despatch No. 157 of the 31st July, 1924, and to which His Imperial Highness's attention was again drawn by the Diplomatic Corps last July (see my despatch No. 88 of the 30th July last). My French colleague hopes that when protesting to the Ras I shall take advantage of the occasion to press for the fulfilment of the Ras's promises.

21. I agree with the conclusion of Mr. Gardiner's memorandum that, if the present conviction be allowed to pass unchallenged, it is useless further to pretend that British subjects in this country are entitled to be tried for offences against Abyssinians according to British Indian law. I would add, as my opinion, that if these men are allowed to be executed, British justice, which stands so high in foreign countries, will have received a blow here from which it will not easily recover.

22. I am forwarding a copy of this despatch to the Government of Somaliland.
I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 1 in No. 48.

Consul Plowman to the Assistant Secretary-in-Charge, Berbera.

Sir,

Harrar, March 15, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to bring to your notice further developments of the incident referred to in paragraph 5 of my despatch forwarded to you under cover of my despatch of the 20th ultimo.

2. A trading caravan of Gadabursi Makahil Dera was arrested by five Abyssinian soldiers near Ibsa for smuggling grain, and was brought to a Jibril Yunis village. The Abyssinians were promised money, and while they were off their guard, were set upon by their captives, bound, taken off into the bush some miles from the village, and there strangled to death with ropes.

3. A punitive force sent from Jigjiga rounded up some twenty prisoners and a quantity of stock. Among the prisoners were six men and two women who claimed to be British subjects. On my making representations, these people were handed over to me for custody. On the 12th instant, I attended a mejlis over this case, at

which the record of the preliminary investigation held at Jigjiga was read over. From this it was established that two of the British subjects, Talan Sharmake and Ahmed Hurwa, both Jibril Yunis rer Mahamud, had acknowledged that they had taken part in the murder. The men corroborated this in my presence. Two others were discharged owing to lack of evidence, and the case of the remaining two men, Farid Wais and Elmi Mumin, both Heibjirreh, and of the two women, Tolmon Ashkir and Midifteh Hurwa, both Jibril Yunis rer Mahamud, was postponed for further evidence. A certain amount of stock belonging to these prisoners is in Abyssinian Government hands at Jigjiga. Talan Sharmake was arrested in British territory by Mahamud Aden, Jibril Yunis rer Mahamud, British subject, and handed over by him to the Abyssinians, as, he said, they had promised him to exchange the man for an Abyssinian Akil of this section who was also a prisoner. Needless to say this promise, if ever made, was not kept. Mahamud Aden's action would appear to have been most arbitrary.

4. Thus, I have six prisoners still with me, and I should be glad to receive instructions as to the line of policy I am to adopt if the Abyssinian Government should demand that the guilty should be handed over to them for execution. Nothing has been said yet as to the form of satisfaction that will be required.

5. To-day I have received a letter from Dejazmatch Imaru asking me to take measures to have the following men arrested and brought to Harrar for trial. They are said to have been concerned in the murder, and to have taken refuge in British territory. According to Akils Goleh Gabobe and Hassan Ao Aden they are all agricultural Gadabursi, who have always lived in Abyssinia. Their names are:—

Abdullahi Gedid, rer Hamud.
Ao Iban, Mahakil Dera Abdi Abokor.
Ahmed Diria, Mahakil Dera Abdi Abokor.
Meiranni Shirdon, Mahakil Dera Abdi Abokor.
Osman Tur, Mahakil Dera Abdi Abokor.
Elmi Ali, Mahakil Dera Abdi Abokor.
Wais Bahdon, rer Ugaz Abdille.
Musa Guled, rer Ugaz Abdille.

I am replying to the Dejazmatch that I have forwarded his request to you, and will inform him in due course when an answer is received.

6. Copies of this despatch are being forwarded to His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Addis Ababa, and to the District Commissioner, Zeyla.

I have, &c.

C. H. F. PLOWMAN.

Enclosure 2 in No. 48.

Consul Plowman to Mr. Bullock (Addis Ababa).

Sir,

Harrar, May 5, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch of the 18th March, 1925, I have the honour to inform you that the relatives of the murdered Abyssinian soldiers appeared in mejliss here yesterday, and claimed their right under Abyssinian law to revenge themselves on the murderers. I told them that this would never be allowed as far as our subjects were concerned, and said that I thought I should have no difficulty in arranging payment of full Moslem diya for those killed by British Gadabursi. They refused absolutely, and I then had no practical alternative but to agree to send up to you for trial the two men who agree that they took part in the murder, as Dejazmatch Imaru has no power to try such cases.

2. I am accordingly sending to-day under escort Tallan Sharmake and Ahmed Hurwa, who should reach Addis Ababa on the 8th instant. Two other prisoners, Abyssinian Gadabursi, and the prosecutors, are due to arrive on the 12th. An account of the investigation held by the Abyssinian Government at Jigjiga and Harrar will presumably be sent with them. The other alleged murderers are still at large, and I enclose for your information a copy of a letter I have received on the subject from Somaliland.

3. As my offer of full diya was rejected, I suggest for your consideration that it should be definitely withdrawn, and that we should take the Diré Dawa massacre of 1921 as a precedent and offer to pay a similar indemnity of 160 dollars only. Once they get to Addis Ababa the claimants will be only too glad, I fancy, to accept

blood-money, and the Abyssinian Government will be unable to quote a single instance of an Abyssinian being executed for the murder of a British Somali, if they persist in their claim for the death penalty in this case.

4. The constable in charge of the prisoners has been instructed to report to you for orders, but I should be grateful if he could be sent back as soon as may be convenient to you. All expenses have been paid as far as Addis Ababa, but not for the return journey.

5. A copy of this despatch is being addressed to the Secretariat, British Somaliland.

I have, &c.

C. H. F. PLOWMAN.

Assistant Secretary, Berbera, to Consul Plowman.

British Somaliland, March 28, 1925.

Sir,

I have the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 18th March, 1925, and am directed by his Excellency the Acting Governor to say that not one of the six prisoners or any other British subject should be handed over to the Abyssinians at any time, whether proved guilty or not. His Majesty's Government have extra-territorial jurisdiction in Abyssinia, and this case must be tried in accordance with the orders laid down.

2. His Excellency suggested that full diya of 100 camels shall be paid for each murder proved, and that when our demands for the 100 camels in respect of the Hendesa affair has been acknowledged a balance should be struck and paid over.

3. With regard to paragraph 5, his Excellency is not prepared at the moment to order that the men should be sent to Harrar. I have written to the District Commissioner, Zeyla, for an expression of his views.

4. His Excellency is of the opinion that the stock held at Jigjiga should be returned to the tribes on the understanding that this action will not prejudice the claim of the Abyssinians.

I have, &c.

W. L. HEAPE.

Enclosure 3 in No. 48.

Consul Plowman to Mr. Bentinck.

Sir,

Harrar, May 26, 1925.

YOUR telegram regarding my despatch No. 24 of the 5th May has just arrived within a few moments of the closing of the Harrar mail to Addis Ababa, so that there is no time to send my reply in a proper form.

2. On the 12th March I attended a mejliss (mixed court) held by Dejazmatch Imaru. I had previously obtained the release of eight British-protected Gadabursi who were handed to me for custody. At this first meeting the account of the investigation held by the Governor of Jigjiga was read out. This gave the history of the affair and cited some twenty people as concerned in varying degrees in the murders, but I confined my attention chiefly to my eight people. Of these, two (the prisoners) had acknowledged at Jigjiga that they were among the party who strangled the Abyssinian, two others were released as I pointed out there was nothing against them, and the rest were remanded as the Government wished to collect from the dossier all the evidence against them. The prisoners confirmed in the mejliss what they had said at Jigjiga, and I questioned them afterwards also. They said Abyssinians were always oppressing them, taking their grain and animals; that Gadabursi had been killed before by Abyssinians; and that they might be killed this time and so they had killed the Abyssinians.

3. I kept all six prisoners at the consulate, and later attended another mejliss in connection with the four who had denied being to blame. The evidence then read out was not conclusive, being chiefly denunciation by the acknowledged murderers, and I eventually obtained the release of all the four on bail to come up for further trial if called upon. The final mejliss was held on the 4th May, when the original enquiry at Jigjiga was again read out for the benefit of the claimants, who had then appeared for the first time. My two prisoners were again asked if they were guilty, and again

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acknowledged that they were; the claimants were asked if they would accept blood-money, and they refused. As Dejazmatch Imaru had no power to judge such cases (except in the event of the claimants agreeing to take blood-money) he said he would have to transfer the whole matter to Addis Ababa for trial. He said he would send the account of the investigation, together with the one Abyssinian Gadabursi who had also confessed and the claimants. I have not been given a copy of this document.

4. Throughout this case I have had many interviews with other Gadabursi, Akils and elders, and they all acknowledged that the two prisoners were among the murderers, and they promised to pay any blood-money that we ordered. The other murderers are still, so far as I know, in British Somaliland.

5. I did not do more than make notes of the various mejliss I attended, as the reading out in Amharic of the Jigjiga dossier occupied several hours, and the two prisoners were not put on trial in any way. The witnesses' statements had been taken down at Jigjiga, and these were read over; the witnesses were not called upon to repeat their evidence at Harrar as the prisoners did not deny their confession.

6. I do not doubt but that pressure was used at Jigjiga to obtain the confessions, but the two men concerned have never attempted to change their statements, and it is certain that they were of the party who murdered the Abyssinians. It is, of course, equally certain that there were others, and that most, if not all, of the eight men mentioned in my despatch forwarded to you under cover of my despatch of the 18th March are equally guilty.

7. As the prisoners in this case were partly British and partly Abyssinian Somalis, I treated it as a political and not as an ordinary criminal case under the Indian Penal Code, and so did not myself hold a preliminary investigation, as I should, of course, have done in other circumstances had only our subjects been accused. Thus it may be said that the two prisoners (and the Abyssinian prisoner) are awaiting to be charged on their own confession with murder, but that so far they have not been tried in any way. I have treated it throughout as a tribal matter to be settled in accordance with precedent by claimant of blood-money by the tribes concerned, and not as an individual murder case triable under the Indian Penal Code.

8. As for precedent, the massacre of British Somalis by Abyssinian soldiers at Diré Dawa in 1921 is ample justification for our refusing to entertain any demand for the application of individual punishment, much less of the death penalty.

9. This massacre was not justifiable in the smallest degree, and the Government refused to punish any of the people responsible, but only after much pressure by all the Legations concerned, reluctantly paid 160 dollars as blood-money for each man killed. There have, further, been innumerable instances of Somalis being killed by Abyssinians in the Harrar Province, and in all cases the Somalis have been made to take blood-money. The Government likes to deny this, and to say that the blood-money was not forced on the Somalis, but it is not so. The murderer in each instance runs away, and the Government states that it is unable to find him. The Somali is then left with the alternative of accepting blood-money or nothing, as the Government never makes any attempt to find the murderer, whose whereabouts is, however, invariably known to them.

10. In regard to this present case, I gather from enquiries I have made that the claimants, if they fail to get what they really want, which is to revenge themselves in kind on the murderers, will accept blood-money willingly, as they would derive no personal satisfaction from any other sentence that might be imposed.

I have, &c.

C. H. F. PLOWMAN.

Enclosure 4 in No. 48.

Mr. Bentinck to Consul Plowman.

Sir,

Addis Ababa, June 15, 1925.

FROM your despatch of the 26th ultimo, respecting the two Somali prisoners accused of murder, it is not clear whether the prisoners acknowledged having been among the party which strangled the Abyssinians in your presence or not. They state that they only acknowledged this under pressure, but not in your presence.

Please report by telegraph whether this is correct.

I am, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 5 in No. 48.

Consul Plowman to Mr. Bentinck.

(Telegraphic.)

Harrar, June 20, 1925.

YOUR despatch dated 15th June.

Original confessions at Jigjiga were not made in my presence, but both prisoners subsequently confirmed them before me here.

Enclosure 6 in No. 48.

Record of the Proceedings at Harrar concerning the Somali Criminals, sent by the Judge Kanyazmatch Atnafei, of Addis Ababa, to Nagadras Afawork.

AS the original which was sent from Jigjiga (to Harrar) has been sent up to Addis Ababa, this has been extracted and sent to us from the proceedings at Jigjiga made by all the prisoners who were chained up and brought before the court in the case of the murder of Wolde-Samait, Kabada, Wolde Amlak, Zalacka and Aschalou, where it was read out to all of them with the exception of those who fled away.

Firstly, the point why the three persons, namely, Talan Shermarkai, Ahmed Hurga and Doordei Samatar were sent here was because they admitted the crime. These three were brought before Kanyazmatch Admasou, the "wombar" (judge), and admitted the murder and took the oath by the King's death to this effect. Moreover, they attended the court of Dejazmatch Imaru and the British consul with chains, where Talan Shermarkai and Ahmed Hurga admitted the murder and took the oath to that effect. Doordei Samatar, who had not admitted the murder before, now denied it. He was questioned if he did not admit the murder at Jigjiga where his verbal statements were written in the records, and also if he did not accept the statements which were read out to him before the wombar. He stated that he admitted the murder at Jigjiga and accepted the statements (or said that they were his own words) on account of receiving several beatings. Talan Shermarkai and the other were questioned if they had seen Doordei Samatar being beaten. They said that they had seen him receiving two slaps on the face. Further, they were questioned if they did not give their evidence against him to the effect that he had committed the murder together with them. Both of them said with one accord that they gave their evidence at Jigjiga that he had committed the murder together with them, and added that they did not see him when they committed the murder, and that the evidence given by them against him was not true, and thus changed their first statements. As they gave their evidence against him at first and changed their statements now, their evidence has no validity. However, it was decided that he (Doordei Samatar) should not be discharged, and that all the three should be sent up to Addis Ababa. The others were brought here, because an evidence was given against Farad Waes Ibro to the effect that he had committed the murder.

Secondly, because Ara Worsama being a damina (chief of the village) found the murderer, who was from his tribe, and allowed him to go.

Thirdly, because these three persons, namely, Arei Sultan, Ali Mader and Abdullahi Usman, were the daminas.

Fourthly, because it was reported that an evidence was given against the following four persons that they were helping in the murder, namely, Elmi Meni, Alfei Digalei, Tolman Askar and Midfala Hurwa.

Fifthly, the following nine persons, namely, Debel Digal, Mohamed Ibrahim, Kayad Ali, Araya Fatch, Umar Adan, Farah Yaberg, Yusuf Mussa, Hussein Buh and Nur Worsama were arrested and brought for examination. All these persons were chained up and kept in the custody of their respective tribes. Those who were required to go to Addis Ababa were ordered to go in chains, together with their written statements when they were examined at Jigjiga. The others were to be released by giving proper guarantors, and those who were unable to produce guarantors to be kept in chains. If those persons were to be required to be sent up to Addis Ababa, i.e., after the statements of the prisoners made at Jigjiga were read at Addis Ababa, they could be brought and sent up by arresting their respective guarantors, and if a fine will be imposed on them to be made to pay it by arresting their guarantors. Therefore, as it was decided that it was not necessary to pay

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railway expenses for their transport to Addis Ababa, where their written statements would be read, those who were Abyssinian subjects were released by giving guarantors, and those who were British subjects were sent to their consul. The relatives of the deceased, namely, Lamma the brother of Aschalou, Kebrat the brother of Zlacka, Jamanah the brother of Wolde Amlak, and Tayei the brother of Wolde Samait were present, and the written statements were read out to them and they were asked what they had to say regarding the murderers. They said that they would not let them go, but bring a charge against the murderers and the others as well, according to justice. Consequently, the relatives of the deceased were told to go to Addis Ababa with the murderers, and that the others would be sent up after an order was received from Addis Ababa to this effect. Accordingly, the murderers, namely, Talan Shermarkei and Ahmed Hurwa, were sent up through their consul, and Doordei Samatar has also been sent up with guards, being in chains with Tayei, the brother of Wolde Samait, the deceased. The other relatives of the deceased, namely, Jamanah, Beru, Kebrat and Lamma, these four took the oath by the King's death at Harrar on the 1st Ginbot to be at Addis Ababa on the 5th Ginbot (May).

This is a copy from the records of Harrar, sent to us with the seal of the court of the wombar at Harrar and with the seal of the wombar named Kanyazmatch Admasou.

In accordance with your request to send you on the 26th Sanei (June) a copy of the proceedings from the records of Harrar, I have sent you same on the 26th Sanei (June).

The 25th Sanei, 1917 (June 1925).

(Sealed)

KANYAZMATCH ATNAFEI.
TISBIIT WOLDE AGIDEI.

(Seal of the Special Court.)

Enclosure 7 in No. 48.

HEARING OF ACCUSATION OF MURDER AGAINST (1) TELEN SHERMARKI, (2) AHMED HARGA, (3) DURDAH SAMANTER.

Mr. Bullock's Notes of the Hearing at the Special Court on July 31, 1925.

THE accusers (relations or representatives of relations of the deceased) are Ato Beru, Germani, Kibut, Werka.

ATO BERU states as follows:—

Five men, Aschalo, Woldo Samal, Kalada, Zallaka, and Waldo Amilak, were sent by Kenasmach Gadla Giorgis, chief of Jigjiga, with other soldiers, into the Gadabursi district near Jigjiga. They were scattered about looking for contraband. Of these soldiers, the five mentioned above were assassinated.

On hearing the news all the peasants assembled to fetch the bodies. The men who removed the bodies made a report to Kenasmach Gadla Giorgis.

(Interval to remove interrupters.)

Lij Taffari, coming from another place [? in opposite direction], met the accused with their beasts, and he thought they were trying to cross the frontier. The men, with their beasts, were stopped—they were asked if they were the people who had killed the five deceased, and they confessed to Kenasmach Gadla Giorgis. Then, with the record of the hearing they were sent to Harrar. Before Dejazmatch Imaru and His Majesty's consul (who took charge of the prisoners) Imaru said to His Majesty's consul: They have confessed. His Majesty's consul said: Even if they have confessed, let them pay blood-money.

His Majesty's consul promised to send them to Addis Ababa.

ATO GERMANI states as follows:—

I only knew I had a relation who died. I was not present, but was summoned to Harrar. I was asked if I would take blood-money. And I said my relation died on duty. I will take no blood-money. But I will kill the man who killed him.

ATO KIBRET states as follows:—

That he is in the same position as the last speakers.

ATO WERKA states as follows:—

That he says the same as the others.

THE JUDGE to Mr. Gardiner (counsel for prisoners): Do the prisoners plead guilty?

MR. GARDINER: Not guilty.

The three prisoners are identified, and on being asked each one pleaded not guilty.

The judge wished to ask the prisoners under what conditions they confessed. After some discussion counsel consents.

Q. (to Samanter and to the two other accused): Did you admit the murder?

A. (by Samanter): I did not admit the murder before anybody.

The other two accused said the same.

After consultation with the three accused—

MR. GARDINER: The accused say that they did not understand. They thought the court was asking if they admitted the crime. I explained to them what the court was asking. Will the court now question them again.

THE JUDGE: You tell me a different story to that of the report of proceedings at Harrar.

TELEN SHERMARKI: We did not commit the murder. At Jigjiga they pressed us to make a confession; the short (Ahmed Hargha) one was heavily beaten over the ear and still has pus in it. At that time we confessed the murder, thinking we would escape worse treatment.

THE JUDGE: The same words that you told at Harrar. Did you say this before the consul and judge at Harrar?

TELEN SHERMARKI: The same thing was reported before the consul and Dejazmatch Imaru at Harrar. Before the Dejazmatch Imaru and the consul there was no proper interpreter.

The three prisoners are accused of murdering (or possibly of abetting or of being present at the murder) of five Abyssinian soldiers.

No evidence of any sort has been produced before this court connecting the prisoners in any way with the murders. The whole case rests on the alleged confession of Durdah Samanter before the court at Jigjiga, and the alleged confession of Telen Shermarkei and Ahmed Hargha, both at Jigjiga and Harrar.

There are considerable grounds for believing that grave pressure was used to extract the confession at Jigjiga, consequently, according to English procedure, there is no case against Durdah Samanter.

I am not aware in whose charge, or under what conditions, the prisoners were immediately before the trial by Dejazmatch Imaru and His Majesty's consul, but it appears to me natural to suppose that they would not have repeated their confession, if the influence of the previous pressure had been removed, and that they were, in fact, afraid of further ill-treatment, if they did not give the answer required. The prisoners also state that they did not understand the interpreter even at Harrar.

I consider that, according to English procedure, the confession of these men should not be considered valid evidence against them.

Durdah Samanter Questioned.

THE JUDGE: Your partners stated at Jigjiga that you were a partner in the murder, and before Dejazmatch Imaru they said you were not a partner in the murder?

A. I am a British subject and spend my time travelling. For eight days I was a prisoner without food, and also in a very bad prison, full of bugs and fleas. Five men were guarding me and they all had big sticks. When I was examined, I said I knew nothing about it. But when a man is hard pressed, he has to admit.

THE JUDGE: Before Dejazmatch Imaru what did you say?

A. When we were before Dejazmatch Imaru the interpreter was an Abyssinian.

THE JUDGE: Your fellow-accused have already said that you were not a partner in the murder.

Before examining the prisoners the judge called for witnesses. But none were forthcoming. The accusers stated that they had no witnesses, they were acting on the advice of the Government, who arrested the prisoners.

A short summary of part of the proceedings of Jigjiga and Harrar was read out. It is very confused and incomplete.

Enclosure 8 in No. 48.

Judge of the Special Court to Ras Taffari.

Your Imperial Highness,

WE summoned in our presence the three British-protected Somalis who were sent from Harrar for the case of murder. We have also examined the relatives of the deceased whether they had any evidence on the subject. They replied that they were not present when the crime was committed, but they were informed by the authorities of Harrar that these people had admitted the murder. As it was necessary for the relatives to be present we have summoned them.

They were questioned by the British consul at Harrar whether they were prepared to accept an indemnity. They replied in the negative and asked that the criminals should be executed.

We questioned the Somalis whether they have committed the murder, but the answer was in the negative. We asked them if they had admitted the murder at Jigjiga when first they were examined and afterwards before the court of Dejazmatch Imaru at Harrar. The answer they gave us was that they admitted the crime, but this was done owing to the bad treatment they had received (they have been badly beaten and prevented from having any food), and that they maintained their admission until they were brought up to a competent tribunal, and still they persisted in saying that they did not commit the murder.

We have the honour to bring to the notice of your Imperial Highness that as the criminals have been brought from a far province and the people who examined this case are far away from Addis Ababa, we were unable to find out more about this case.

Dated the 25th Hamled, 1917 (1st August, 1925).

AFAWORK,
Judge of the Special Court.

Enclosure 9 in No. 48.

Judgment of Ras Taffari, November 11, 1925.

To His Excellency Mr. Charles Bentinck,

His Britannic Majesty's Minister Plenipotentiary.
(After Greetings.)

I AM sending you herewith a copy of the judgment given in the court of His Imperial Highness to Heir to the Throne, in the case of the three Somalis, namely, Talan Shermarkei, Ahmed Harwa and Doordei Samatar, who murdered the Abyssinian soldiers, Wolde Samait, Kabada, Wolde Amlak, Zalacka and Aschalou. I have the honour to ask you to see that the judgment is executed soon.

The 2nd Hidar, 1918 (11th November, 1925).

SAHLEI SADALOU.

(Seal of the Abyssinian Foreign Office.)

We, Taffair Makonen, Regent and Heir Apparent to the Throne of Ethiopia:
Talan Shermarkei, Ahmed Harwa and Doordei Samatar, these three persons were arrested on a charge for murdering five Abyssinian soldiers, namely, Wolde Samait, Kabada, Wolde Amlak, Zalacka and Aschalou. On the 23rd Yekatit, 1917

(February 1925), they were examined at Jigjiga by the Abyssinian authorities there and all three admitted the murder. Doordei Samatar, who was examined later on, said that the statements made by the two persons were true, that he (D. S.), Madani Sherdon, Elmi Ali, we three have murdered the tall Abyssinian. Further, he said that the statements made by us three were true, and that they would not change their statements, and took the oath by the King's death to this effect. They attended the court of the wombar (judge) at Harrar, and the written statements which they stated before the judge at Jigjiga were read out to them, and all three admitted once more that the statements were true, and took the oath by the King's death to that effect.

On the 28th Yekatit (February), 3rd Magabit (March), the 8th and 26th Miazia (April), 1917 (1925), respectively, being present before Dejazmatch Imaru and the British consul, Talan Shermarkei and Ahmed Harwa admitted the murder again, as they did at Jigjiga, and took the oath by the King's death that the statements were true. Doordei Samatar denied the first statement at Jigjiga, and said that the statement he made before the judge at Jigjiga and Harrar was not true and denied the murder. Doordei Samatar stated that he admitted the murder before the judge at Jigjiga because he was beaten and prevented from having food. Talan Shermarkei and Ahmed Harwa were questioned whether they had seen Doordei Samatar being beaten. They replied that they saw him receiving slaps on the face. They were questioned if they did not state at Jigjiga that Doordei Samatar had committed the murder together with them. They said "Yes," but stated that they did not see him when they committed the murder.

On the 24th Hamlei, 1917 (July 1925), they attended the Special Court and were examined on the subject. The three accused denied the murder and the statements made by them at Jigjiga, and also the statements made by them admitting the murder, for which they took the oath by the King's death before the judge and our representative at Harrar and the British consul there. The situation of the case is as follows:—

The three accused have admitted the murder before the judge at Jigjiga. They have also admitted the same before the wombar (judge) at Harrar. Two of them have also admitted the murder before Dejazmatch Imaru and the British consul. At the Special Court all the three denied the murder, and stated that they only admitted the murder on account of continual beating and hunger. The already made examination shows that the three accused admitted the murder before the wombar at Harrar and that Talan Shermarkei and Ahmed Harwa entirely admitted the murder before Dejazmatch Imaru and the British consul, and that Doordei Samatar admitted the murder for fear of being beaten at Jigjiga. It is impossible to believe the statements made by the three accused saying that they were beaten, because they did not agree with each other on this point. With regard to what Doordei Samatar stated before Dejazmatch Imaru and the British consul that he was beaten at first, when the two accused, namely, Talan Shermarkei and Ahmed Harwa, were questioned if they had seen Doordei Samatar being beaten, they replied that they had seen him receiving slaps on the face, but they did not see even once being beaten with a stick. They did not say that they were beaten themselves. When they attended the Special Court they said they were also beaten. Talan Shermarkei, who did not utter a word up to now to say that he was beaten, now stated before the judge of the Special Court that he was made to admit the murder by force and by being flogged and beaten for a month at Jigjiga. Ahmed Harwa, pleading on his turn, stated that he admitted the murder because he was imprisoned for eight days in a place full of fleas and prevented from having food and water and was put in custody under five guards. Under these circumstances, the statements of the three accused saying that they were beaten is incredible, and it is a proof that they did not tell the truth. When they attended the court of the wombar at Harrar all the three admitted the murder. They had no fear whatsoever of any beating at that time, and therefore wilfully admitted the murder. Now they deny the fact that they did admit the murder before Dejazmatch Imaru and the British consul. Consequently, this proves that they do not say the truth, and that it is impossible to believe their present statements denying the murder. When the accused attended the court of Dejazmatch Imaru, the British consul was convinced and knew that the criminals were the true murderers. Therefore, it is clearly shown to us that they were guilty. Accordingly, the British consul stated that the three accused must pay blood-money. The relatives of the deceased were asked if they would accept blood-money, to which they replied in the negative. Under these circumstances, Dejazmatch Imaru said that they must have

to be put to death in accordance with the provisions of the law. The British consul said that, as the accused are Somalis, according to the Somalis' law blood-money has to be paid, and they could not be condemned to death; that it was impossible to judge this matter according to Abyssinian law; neither could they be condemned to death according to law. It seems that there is a mistake on this point, because two Somalis attended the court of the British consul-general at Addis Ababa on a charge of murder of one Somali, and one of them was condemned to death on the 4th August, 1925, and the other was sentenced to an imprisonment of one year. The said Somalis requested to be judged according to the law of their country, and paid blood-money, but the British consul-general put aside the law of the Somalis and judged them according to British law. One of them was condemned to death and the other to an imprisonment, and gave a decision against them according to the British law, and not according to that of the Somali law. The British law shows us that death sentence could be given on a charge of murder, and that the British law will also condemn to death the present accused for the murder committed by them.

With regard to a criminal, the British law states as follows:—

"The statement made by an accused personally admitting the charge will be a sufficient evidence to prove that the person is guilty. Also, if an accused denies before the last judge who might give his judgment against him, i.e., the previous statements made before one judge by the accused intentionally and written before the same judge shall be a distinct proof that the accused is guilty although if proofs are not available to what he said before."

Even if judgment should be given against the accused in the above case according to British law, and as the persons were guilty of murder, and as the relatives of the deceased refused to accept blood-money, the judgment to be given against them is death sentence.

Therefore, I hereby condemn to death the three accused, namely, Talan Shermarkei, Ahmed Harwa and Doordei Samatar, the persons who murdered the five Abyssinian soldiers, namely, Wolde Samait, Kabada, Wolde Amlak, Zalacka and Aschalou, on the 27th Tir, 1917 (January 1925), in a place called Gibril Yunisa and Habjir, within the Gadabursi country. Let it be that Agafari Wolde Mariam should receive from the British consulate the above-mentioned three Somalis and hand them over to the public executioner in order to execute the judgment.

Our witness is the Lord, Who examines and knows our hearts that we have examined from the beginning to the end the case of the plaintiffs and defendants, that we have given a true judgment according to what we considered and thought.

This is a true copy of the judgment given in the Court of His Imperial Highness the Heir to the Throne in the case of the three Somalis, namely, Talan Shermarkei, Ahmed Harwa and Doordei Samatar, who were charged for having murdered Wolde Samait, Kabada, Wolde Amlak, Zalacka and Aschalou.

The 2nd Hidar, 1918 (11th November, 1925).

SAHLEI SADALOU.

(Seal of the Abyssinian Foreign Office.)

Enclosure 10 in No. 48.

Mr. Bentinck to Ras Taffari.

Your Imperial Highness,

I HAVE received with astonishment Ato Sahlei Sadalou's letter of the 11th November forwarding your judgment convicting the three Somalis named Talan Shermarkei, Ahmed Hurwa and Doordei Samatar of murder, and directing that the men be taken over from the British consulate for execution.

This is a very grave matter which I am referring to my Government. In the meantime the prisoners will remain in my custody.

I avail, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 11 in No. 48.

Memorandum by Mr. A. L. Gardiner, M.A., L.L.B., on the Trial of the Three Somalis.

Addis Ababa, November 14, 1925.

Sir,

AS requested by you, I have the honour to enclose herewith some notes on the trial of the three British Somalis for murder. The more one reflects on this trial, the more illegal it appears to be. In my notes I have kept to the more important matters, and have not attempted to point out every small irregularity. I also return herewith the copy of the judgment.

I have, &c.

A. L. GARDINER.

Notes on the Trial of Three British Somalis (No. 1, Talan Shermakei; No. 2, Ahmed Hurwa; and No. 3, Doordei Samatar) for Murder.

There appears to be some doubt as to the early history of this matter. According to the judgment of His Highness, the stages were as follows:—

1. February 1925. Examination of all three at Jigjiga by the Abyssinian authorities—all three admitted the murder.
2. No. 3 separately examined later on, and again admitted the murder.
3. Examination before the wombar (judge) at Harrar. Written statements of what they said at Jigjiga read out, and all three admitted they were true.
4. February, March and April 1925 (four occasions in all). Examination before Dejazmatch Imaru and British consul at Harrar. Nos. 1 and 2 admit murder. No. 3 denied his statement made at Jigjiga and Harrar, denied the murder and stated that his confession was extorted from him by beating and lack of food. Nos. 1 and 2 admit that they did not see No. 3 commit murder.

The accused were then sent up to Addis Ababa, and I was instructed to defend them. I had an interview with the accused, who one and all denied the murder, their story being: (1) That at the time of their arrest they were living within the limits of a tribe not their own, and that this tribe, when suspected, promptly surrendered them as being strangers; (2) that at Jigjiga they were badly beaten and thus made to confess; they showed me marks on their bodies which they said were the results of a beating, and also prods from the muzzles of rifles, and one had a suppurating ear, which he alleged was the result of a blow; (3) that at Harrar before the British consul they were told to repeat what they said at Jigjiga, and they did so.

I repeatedly asked to be supplied with a copy of the former proceedings, but, besides being shown despatches from the British consul, Harrar, to His Britannic Majesty's Minister, all I ever saw was a letter from Dejazmatch Imaru to the Addis Ababa authorities. In this letter the most important matter was the statement that at Jigjiga all three admitted the murder, that at Harrar Nos. 1 and 2 admitted it, but No. 3 denied it and pleaded that he was beaten. Nos. 1 and 2 admitted that they had said that No. 3 was a partner, but they now denied it, so their evidence was of no value. At the conclusion of the letter Dejazmatch Imaru says that he sends herewith copy of proceedings at Harrar. I may mention that I at once applied for this "copy of proceedings," but was informed by the British consul (Mr. Bullock) that there was nothing else, and he presumed that the matters contained in the letter were in fact the copy of the proceedings.

Such was the position when I was briefed for the defence. The question then arose as to the exact procedure, and I endeavoured to obtain information on this point from the British Legation. The Legation, however, were not able to give me any definite information, as the whole law governing the matter appeared to be unsettled, but the position appeared to be: (1) That the accused were entitled to be tried under British Indian law and ? procedure; (2) that the case would be first heard in the Special Court—this being a preliminary enquiry under section 208 seq. of the Code of Criminal Procedure; (3) that the trial would take place in the Chillot of His Highness as a Court of Session, vide Chapter 23 of the Code of Criminal Procedure.

In July 1925 the case came before the Special Court, and I duly attended for the defence. No evidence was adduced on behalf of the prosecution, the court merely being in possession (as far as I am aware) of the letter of Dejazmatch Imaru. The judge adopted an inquisitorial attitude, going far beyond the limits allowed by British law, and, in spite of my protests, tried to make the accused confess. All of them, however, alleged that their former confessions were extorted from them by

duress, and the proceedings terminated. I understand that the judge and the British consul reported to His Highness that no evidence had been adduced against the accused.

On the 26th October, 1925, the case was called on in the Chillot, and I duly attended. Before this hearing I endeavoured to ascertain what exactly would take place in the Chillot, but without success. I gathered, however, that the point under discussion would be whether the accused should be acquitted, or whether the prosecution should be given a further chance of adducing evidence.

On appearing before His Highness I found to my very great surprise: (1) That the proceedings before the Special Court were being practically ignored; (2) that the proceedings were being made to depend on (a) the letter from Dejazmatch Imaru, (b) possibly other information from Harrar of which I had never had notice, and (c) a further letter from Dejazmatch Imaru, written since the proceedings in the Special Court, of which I had had no notice; (3) I was practically called upon to show cause why the accused should not be convicted on their own confessions at Jigjiga.

I regret to have to say that I regard this so-called trial in the Chillot of His Highness as a farce. The most perfunctory attention was paid to my remarks; it appeared to me to be quite obvious that I was being allowed to talk merely in order that it might not be said afterwards that the accused were not defended; the court adopted an inquisitorial attitude to the accused, and tried to make them repeat their confessions; and lastly, right up to the end of the proceedings I was not aware that this so-called trial could possibly result in a conviction, as no charge had ever been framed (section 210 of the Code of Criminal Procedure), and I never had the slightest chance of adducing evidence on behalf of the accused.

On the 12th November, 1925, I learnt to my great astonishment that the accused had been convicted and sentenced to death, the conviction proceeding on their confessions at Jigjiga and Harrar.

Before I pass to the legal aspect of a conviction merely on the confession of an accused, I have the following observations to offer on what took place at Jigjiga and Harrar:—

1. The accused are British subjects. What right, therefore, had the Abyssinians to examine them at Jigjiga without the presence of the British consul? The so-called confessions at Jigjiga cannot therefore be considered as confessions made to a magistrate. If they be considered as confessions made to a police official, they are inadmissible under section 25 of the Indian Evidence Act.
2. The same remarks apply to the examination before the wambar at Harrar.
3. What were the proceedings before Dejazmatch Imaru and the British consul at Harrar? Were they a preliminary examination under section 208 seq. of the Criminal Procedure Code? If so, what were the proceedings in the Special Court, before the case went to the Chillot? Whichever was the preliminary examination, it is clear that neither the provisions recording the proceedings of a preliminary examination nor the provisions of section 164 of the Code of Criminal Procedure were complied with.

Passing to the legal aspect, it is clear, *vide* section 24 of the Indian Evidence Act, that a confession (other than a confession to a police officer, *vide* section 25) is relevant, if such confession appears to the court to have been made voluntarily. But it is one thing to say that confession is relevant, and another to say that it is conclusive; and the propositions are too well established in British law to require to be argued by me to the effect: (1) That even if the confession is relevant it must be proved by the proper methods; and (2) that if the accused, at his trial, retracts his former confession, the court (a) will require to be satisfied that the confession was voluntary before even admitting it, and (b) will give the accused every latitude for showing that it was not voluntary or for proving that it was not true, and generally for adducing the evidence necessary for his defence.

In conclusion, I would refer especially to section 533 of the Code of Criminal Procedure and to the section referred to therein, none of which sections were complied with in the present case.

To sum up my main contentions that the present conviction in the Chillot is illegal according to British Indian law:—

1. There is no evidence against the accused, except their so-called confessions.
2. It is not clear whether the proceedings at Harrar or those in the Special Court were the preliminary examination.

3. It is not proved that the so-called confessions were relevant, and the accused and their counsel were never clearly informed whether the confessions were admitted in evidence or not.
4. In any event, accused No. 3 never confessed before the consul at Harrar.
5. Even if the confessions were relevant, they were not proved in accordance with law.
6. The accused and their counsel were not aware that the trial in the Chillot was the final trial, which might result in the conviction of the accused.

No charge against the accused had been framed, and their counsel merely argued the point as to the admissibility of the confessions in evidence. The accused were never called upon to enter on their defence (*vide* section 289 of the Code of Criminal Procedure), and never had the slightest opportunity of calling witnesses for their defence.

In case it may be of use, I append a list of cases bearing on the question of a confession.

In conclusion I offer it as my humble opinion that if the present conviction be allowed to pass unchallenged, it is useless further to pretend that British subjects in this country are entitled to be tried for offences against Abyssinians, according to British Indian law.

A. L. GARDINER.

Addis Ababa, November 14, 1925.

Appendix.

- | | |
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| Q. v. Choda Atchenah 3 Mad. 318. | Q. v. Jadub Das I.L.R. 27 Cal. 295. |
| R. v. Kashimath Dinkar 8 Bom. Cr. 126. | Q. v. Bheebekkee 4 N.W. 16. |
| Q. v. Kodai Kahar 5 W.R. Cr. 6. | Q. v. Kala Chand Pal 24 W.R. Cr. 29. |
| Q. v. Uzeer xx. I.L.R. 10 Cal. 775. | E. v. Hari Kisto Biswas 5 C.L.R. 209. |
| R. v. Garbad Bechar 9 Bom. 344. | R. v. Amrita Govinda 10 Bom. 497. |
| Sofiruddeen v. Emp. 2 C.L.R. 132. | R. v. Shivya I.L.R. 1 Bom. 219. |
| Q. v. Bharmappa I.L.R. 12 Mad. 123. | Noshai Mistri v. Emp. I.L.R. 5 Cal. 958. |
| Q. v. Ranji I.L.R. 10 Mad. 295. | E. v. Daji Narsu I.L.R. 6 Bom. 288. |
| Q. v. Mahabir I.L.R. 18 All. 78. | |

The cases reported as under may also be of use:—

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|----------------------|--------------------|---------------------|
| 2 Lah. 325. | 10 B.H.C.R. 166. | 12 Cr. L.J. 489. |
| 23 Cr. L.J. 149. | A.W.N. (1883) 243. | 1 Bom. L.R. 357. |
| 4 U.P.L.R. (L.) 33. | 17 C. 862. | 51 P.R. 1887 (Cr.). |
| 1922 Lah. 237. | 2 Weir 137. | 6 A. 509. |
| 8 Bom. L.R. 950. | Weir 140. | 3 Bom. L.R. 441. |
| 19 Cr. L.J. 507. | 3 L.B.R. 173. | 18 A. 78. |
| L.R. 3 A. 101 (Cr.). | 15 Cr. L.J. 633. | 9 A. 528 (566). |
| 4 Pat. L.T. 279. | 4 Cr. L.J. 198. | 2 C.W.N. 702. |

Enclosure 12 in No. 48.

Note by Mr. Home.

IN view of the fact that the Special Court had agreed that there was not evidence sufficient to convict the accused, I considered that the trial before Ras Taffari would have to result in a public acquittal or that some witnesses would be produced against the accused.

I agree with the three paragraphs in Mr. Gardiner's note of the 14th November, 1925, beginning: "On the 26th October the case was called on in the Chillot." As regards point 6 on p. 5, I considered that the trial in Ras's court was the final trial. The accused were not asked if they intended to call witnesses in their defence, but the court probably thought that if accused had wished to call witnesses they should have said so.

After leaving the Ras's court, I considered that there could be no question of finding the three accused guilty unless and until witnesses were produced to prove the case against them.

A. D. HOME.

November 17, 1925.

[J 3279/1500/1]

No. 49.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 310.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 8, 1925.

AS suggested in your despatch No. 161 of the 16th October, an order has now been prepared and is transmitted to you herewith empowering His Majesty's consul at Harar to hold courts anywhere within his consular district. The copy of the order bearing my signature should be signed and dated by you and exhibited in the consular office at Harar. Other copies are enclosed for your retention.

2. In forwarding the new order to Mr. Plowman, you should inform him that there is of course no objection to a consular court dealing with mixed cases where the foreigner voluntarily submits to its jurisdiction. This is provided for in Part VII of the Abyssinia Order in Council. The remarks made in my despatch No. 174 of the 17th August were intended to convey that the consular courts had no jurisdiction unless the foreigner expressly agreed to submit his case to them, and they could not claim to try it if the foreign litigant withheld his consent.

3. I agree that there is no objection to the unofficial arbitration tribunals referred to in paragraph 2 of your despatch being held as in the past.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3565/681/1]

No. 50.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 80.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, December 14, 1925.

YOUR despatch No. 186 of 16th November: British Somalis sentenced to death by Ras Tafari.

You should make a communication on the following lines to the Abyssinian Government and, if necessary, the Empress Judith, though I leave to your discretion how much of legal argument you should include.

His Majesty's Government are satisfied that no case has been made out against any of the accused which under the law of any civilised country would warrant their conviction and punishment.

His Majesty's Government have observed with regret that, contrary to his practice in similar circumstances when another Power was concerned, the Ras pronounced judgment before consulting you. This in itself would be enough to render that judgment null and void in the view of His Majesty's Government, were it not already invalid on following purely legal grounds:—

1. Under article 7 of Klobukowski Treaty case must be tried by Abyssinian magistrate assisted by British consul, and only in event of their disagreeing, which they did not (*cf.* Enclosure 8 in your despatch under reference), does case come before High Court of the King of Kings. Therefore, on basis of treaty, the Ras had no jurisdiction to take the case. If, however, not the treaty, but the *Règlement judiciaire* of 1922 applies, the case is governed by article 1, which provides that special tribunal of a European and Abyssinian judge shall sit as "chambre des mises en exécution, c'est-à-dire qu'il procédera à une instruction complète de l'accusation et consignera ses conclusions par écrit déférera l'accusé au Tribunal suprême du souverain qui décidera de l'application de la peine." All that sovereign can do is to decide whether any, and, if so, what, punishment shall be applied upon written conclusions of special tribunal; he has no right to hear or consider fresh evidence which was not before the special tribunal, nor to convict if, as in present case, special tribunal reports that evidence is insufficient.
2. Under terms of treaty (or the *Règlement* if it applies) accused must be judged according to their national law, in this case British-Indian law, under which confession is evidence only if given in evidence upon sworn testimony subject to cross-examination. Accused must be permitted to explain their confession, and if they prove it to have been extorted by threats or violence, confession as evidence must be rejected. It is not

clear that sworn evidence of confession was ever given, and it appears to rest on Dojan Imaru's letter (*cf.* Enclosure 6, which purports to be a copy of records of Harrar Court), and a letter as such is not evidence. Even if regarded as depositions of a lower court its admissibility is doubtful against first two accused, and it is inadmissible against third. Ras Tafari having condemned all three, argument that letter must be regarded as depositions fails.

Prisoners will have to be removed from Abyssinia under British guard and handed over to Somaliland authorities as soon as you consider this can be done with safety.

If necessary, I shall publish your despatch and enclosures with necessary omissions and these instructions so that world may know the nature of Abyssinian justice.

(Confidential.)

Even if it is the case that two of the accused only withdraw their confessions because settlement by payment of blood-money was refused, this does not absolve Abyssinian Government from the duty of proving their guilt in proper legal manner before convicting.

Copies of your despatch under reference and of this telegram have been sent to His Majesty's Ambassadors at Paris and Rome with instructions to request the French and Italian Governments to instruct their respective representatives at Addis Ababa to support your representations to the Abyssinian Government.

[J 3565/681/1]

No. 51.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris), No. 4125, and to Sir R. Graham (Rome), No. 1913, mutatis mutandis.

Foreign Office, December 14, 1925.

My Lord,

I TRANSMIT to your Lordship herewith copies of a despatch* and enclosures from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa and of a telegram† in which I have instructed him to refuse to recognise the sentence of death pronounced upon three British Somalis by His Imperial Highness Ras Tafari.

2. I request that you will immediately communicate to the French Government the substance of Mr. Bentinck's despatch and request them to instruct their representative at Addis Ababa by telegram to support the representations which he has been instructed to make. I need not enlarge upon the importance of maintaining a united front where the question of criminal jurisdiction over the subjects of a European Power in Abyssinia is involved, and I trust that, realising this, the French Government will comply promptly with the request which, in accordance with these instructions, you will address to them.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3626/681/1]

No. 52.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 14.)

(No. 195. Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, November 23, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 186 of the 16th instant, I have the honour to report that my Italian colleague, who has met the Ras on one or two occasions since I addressed to His Imperial Highness my note of the 14th November, tells me that at first the Ras affected not to realise that I was dissatisfied with his judgment

* No. 48.

† No. 59.

[14106]

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in the case of the three Somalis. Count Colli explained to him that I had been greatly displeased, and that, even if I had written a perfectly polite note, I should nevertheless be absolutely firm and should never yield up the prisoners. He reminded His Imperial Highness of the concluding words of article 7 of the Klobukowsky Treaty of the 10th January, 1908, and added that there had never been a case of a foreign subject having ever been handed back to the Abyssinian authorities for execution of a sentence since diplomatic relations had existed between Abyssinia and Europe. Count Colli went on to explain that I had every reason to be angry at his demand, for he himself would rather leave the country altogether than give way. The Ras observed that the treaty was meant to apply to Europeans, but not to Somalis and other coloured subjects of European countries. Count Colli's next remark, however, showed the Ras that his observation had been a foolish one, which he withdrew. His Imperial Highness then said that it would be necessary to reach a settlement by some other way.

2. A few days later the Ras seems to have come under some other influence, for he sent Count Colli a message to say that it was his sovereign right to execute the Somalis, and that, if necessary, he would appeal to the League of Nations.

3. I discovered that the judgment had been drawn up by the French lawyer whom I had asked to defend the prisoners in the case of Mahmoud Furi (see my despatch No. 97 of the 6th August). I therefore sent for him and told him that, having made use of the knowledge which he had gained at that trial, it was his duty to tell the Ras of your decision to commute the sentence on Furi to ten years with a possible further reduction which was announced to me in your despatch No. 213 of the 28th September last and of which I had already informed him. Maître Chanoit promised to do this. He disclaimed all responsibility for the judgment which he had drafted on instructions from the Ras, in whose service he is. He told me that it had been drawn up long before my interview with the Ras on the 7th November, recorded in paragraph 7 of my despatch under reference, and before I had informed him of the nature of your despatch No. 213. He was ready to admit privately that no court in England or France could have condemned these men owing to lack of evidence.

4. I must confess to extreme disappointment at the attitude of the Ras, which, however, has surprised my colleagues less than myself. Considering the exceedingly friendly manner in which every question had thus far been handled, I had certainly expected to be consulted if there should have been any possibility of a sentence to which I might have taken exception. This my French and Italian colleagues had led me to expect, and as this had occurred in the case of my French colleague, as recorded in paragraph 13 of my despatch under reference, there was no reason to suppose that I should have received less consideration than M. Gaussen, whose personal relations with the Ras have not always been of the best.

5. The prisoners are in safe custody at this Legation, and I await your instructions before taking further action in this matter.

I am forwarding copy of this despatch to the Acting Governor of Somaliland.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 3721/897/1]

No. 53.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 23.)

(No. 117.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

YOUR telegram No. 84.

Addis Ababa, December 22, 1925.

I now suggest holding this for settlement until I return in view of endeavour to settle [group undecypherable] with other Somali questions mentioned in my telegram No. 115.

[J 3708/681/1]

No. 54.

The Marquess of Crewe to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 23.)

(No. 2748.)

Sir,

Paris, December 22, 1925.

ON receipt of your despatch No. 4125 of the 14th December regarding the action of the Abyssinian Government in sentencing to death three British Somalis, I immediately addressed a note to the President of the Council giving a brief account of the incident, and urging that the French representative at Addis Ababa should be at once instructed to support the representations which Mr. Bentinck had been directed to make. This note was forwarded to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs under cover of a letter to M. Berthelot, whose attention was drawn to the great importance which His Majesty's Government attach to the question at issue. Copies of my note and of the letter to M. Berthelot were enclosed in my despatch No. 2687 of the 16th December.

2. I have now received a reply from M. Briand to my representations, in which it is stated that the necessary instructions have been sent to M. Gaussen as desired by His Majesty's Government. M. Briand's note was accompanied by a private letter from M. Berthelot, who makes it clear that the French Government share the views of His Majesty's Government regarding the desirability that the European Powers represented at Addis Ababa should act in close concert in this matter, in which an important question of principle is involved. I have the honour to enclose herein copies of M. Briand's note and of M. Berthelot's private letter.

3. I venture to suggest that I be authorised to express His Majesty's Government's thanks for the readiness with which the French Government has adopted their proposal.

I have, &c.

CREWE.

Enclosure 1 in No. 54.

M. Berthelot to the Marquess of Crewe.

Paris, le 19 décembre 1925.

Ambassadeur,

PAR sa lettre du 16 de ce mois, votre Excellence a bien voulu me signaler, de la part de son Gouvernement, l'incident provoqué à Addis Ababa par la condamnation à mort prononcée dans des conditions illégales par le Ras Tafari contre trois Somalis, sujets britanniques, sans que la preuve de leur culpabilité ait pu être faite, ni sans que le Ministre de Grande-Bretagne ait été consulté avant le prononcé du jugement.

J'ai l'honneur de vous faire savoir que le Gouvernement français est d'accord avec le Gouvernement britannique pour estimer que ce mode de procédé soulève, concernant la juridiction criminelle sur les sujets de Puissances européennes résidant en Éthiopie, une question de principe dont les deux Gouvernements ont un réel intérêt à poursuivre le règlement en étroite collaboration.

Je serais donc particulièrement obligé à votre Excellence de bien vouloir faire savoir à Sir Austen Chamberlain que j'ai invité, par le télégraphe, le Ministre de France à Addis Ababa à appuyer les démarches que son collègue de Grande-Bretagne doit entreprendre, à cet effet, auprès du Prince Héritier d'Éthiopie.

Veillez, &c.

(Pour le Président, &c.),

BERTHELOT.

Enclosure 2 in No. 54.

M. Berthelot to Mr. Phipps.

Paris, le 16 décembre 1925.

Mon cher Ministre,

JE m'empresse d'accuser réception de la lettre que vous m'avez adressée, pour signaler à mon attention la note par laquelle M. le Marquis de Crewe a bien voulu faire part à M. le Président du Conseil, Ministre des Affaires étrangères, de l'incident intervenu entre le Gouvernement de Sa Majesté britannique et le Gouvernement éthiopien, à la suite de la condamnation à mort prononcée par le Ras Tafari contre trois Somalis, sujets britanniques.

[14106]

Le Ministère des Affaires étrangères estime, comme le Foreign Office, qu'il y a un réel intérêt à ce que les Puissances européennes représentées à Addis-Ababa agissent de concert auprès du Gouvernement éthiopien pour régler la question de principe que soulève cette affaire, et vous trouverez, sous ce pli, la réponse de M. Aristide Briand marquant que le Quai d'Orsay a invité, par le télégraphe, M. Gaussen à appuyer les démarches que M. Bentinck doit entreprendre, à ce sujet, auprès du Prince Héritier.

Je vous prie, &c.
(Pour le Président, &c.),
BERTHELOT.

[J 3729/681/1]

No. 55.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 23.)

(No. 118.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, December 21, 1925.

ON receipt of your telegram No. 80 I sent for Bilata Herui, whom my colleagues consider most influential personage at the moment and read to him contents. I explained that I did so in interests of good relations, to give Ras last chance to make a spontaneous offer for solution, otherwise I should be obliged to address note officially. Relations would then become very grave and I should have to explain reason to Empress. I threatened publication and added that my French and Italian colleagues knew all about the case and would give me their whole-hearted support. In no circumstances would I ever yield.

Bilata Herui begged me to-day not to send official note, but to have patience in view of very difficult situation in which Ras was placed. He was authorised by Ras to say that if I would wait till my return from Khartum he was hopeful of being able to reach friendly settlement. Ras would do everything he properly could for me and would not make any demand for surrender of prisoners in my absence. Bilata Herui promised me in the meantime to do his utmost to prepare the ground for amicable settlement, but asked me to continue to keep prisoners at His Majesty's Legation.

Basis for settlement would be obligation of relatives of murdered men to accept money as originally offered by Mr. Plowman (see enclosure 2 in my despatch No. 186), but I have explained clearly that if such payment were agreed to by the Government of Somaliland on behalf of tribesmen in order to reach amicable settlement, it could in no circumstances be taken as admission of guilt of the three prisoners, which I did not admit. Also, that settlement of Hendesa affair must be reached at the same time.

My Italian colleague, who has been most helpful throughout, agrees with me that I can now count upon amicable settlement on return from Khartum, and that, in view of above assurances, it would be wiser to hold up note.

I trust you approve.

[J 3708/681/1]

No. 56.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 356.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, December 24, 1925.

MY despatch No. 1913 of 14th December: Italian co-operation in Abyssinia. French Government have telegraphed necessary instructions to their representative at Addis Ababa.

[J 3729/681/1]

No. 57.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 87.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, December 24, 1925.

YOUR telegrams No. 115 of 21st December and No. 117 of 22nd December: Cases pending with Abyssinian Government.

Your proposals are approved.

No. 58.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 25.)

(No. 120.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, December 24, 1925.

MY telegram No. 115.

Ras has now begged my Italian colleague to help him to explain situation to Council of Advisers in order to reach settlement with me.

No. 59.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 29.)

(No. 305.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Rome, December 28, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 356.

Instructions on lines desired have been also telegraphed by Italian Government.

CHAPTER IV.—JIBUTI DUES.

[J 3356/181/1]

No. 60.

Foreign Office to Board of Trade.

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 26, 1925.

WITH reference to the letter from this Department of the 29th October, I am directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to inform you that he has learnt from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa that the delay which has occurred in furnishing the information regarding the transit charges at Jibuti has largely been due to the difficulty of obtaining reports from Jibuti now that there is no vice-consul at that port.

2. Mr. Bentinck has collected certain statistics, but, in his opinion, they do not adequately answer the questions put to him in the Foreign Office despatch, of which a copy was sent to you on the 23rd July last. He is, however, in communication with his Italian colleague, whose Government have also called for similar information, and hopes shortly to be able to report on the effect of the new tariff.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 3566/181/1]

No. 61.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 7.)

(No. 187.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, November 16, 1925.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 143, Confidential, of the 20th July last, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of notes compiled for me by Mr. Nestor Mavris, of the Abyssinian Corporation, regarding the transit charges at Jibuti.

2. I regret the delay in forwarding this information, but, as there is no longer a British vice-consul at Jibuti, accurate details were not easy to obtain. Mr. Mavris has taken a considerable amount of trouble in compiling the present report, which appears to me to be clear and to the point. I also enclose copies of the "Journal officiel" for December 1921 and December 1924, which give details regarding the old and new tariffs.*

3. It will be seen that the new "taxe contributive aux services rendus au commerce," introduced on the 1st January, 1925, is higher both as regards imports and exports than the former "droits de contrôle et de vérification," whilst as regards imports the dues called "droits accessoires" remain the same. As regards exports, the "droits accessoires" have been decreased in most cases, but not sufficiently to counteract the increase in the "taxe contributive." Thus the customs dues applied in 1925 are higher than those for the year 1924.

4. My Italian colleague is endeavouring himself to obtain details of the charges at Jibuti, which he proposes to discuss with me when they reach him. We may then consider it desirable to hear what our French colleague has to say on the subject. As I understand that my report called for in your despatch under reply is urgently awaited at the Foreign Office, I forward the present details now and may revert to the subject at a later date.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

* Not printed.

Enclosure in No. 61.

Customs Dues on Imports and Exports at Jibuti.

YEAR 1924.

THE customs charges at Jibuti may be classified as follows:—

1. Droits de consommation.
2. Droits de contrôle et de vérification.
3. Droits accessoires:

- (a.) Droits de quai.
- (b.) Droits de statistique.
- (c.) Droits de tonnage.

4. Taxe spéciale de reconnaissance.

The classifications for the customs are:—

1. Goods for consumption in Jibuti from Europe or Abyssinia.
2. Goods declared for importation to Jibuti and then re-exported
3. Goods from Europe (in transit) for Abyssinia.
4. Goods from Abyssinia (in transit) for Europe.

It is unnecessary to review classifications Nos. 1 and 2. We shall therefore limit our remarks to Nos. 3 and 4, which would seem to call for comment.

Goods from Europe (in transit) for Abyssinia are taxed under—

Droits de contrôle et de vérification, plus
Droits accessoires, i.e.—

- (a.) Droits de quai;
- (b.) Droits de statistique;
- (c.) Droits de tonnage;

Multiplied by coefficient 2 (see "Journal officiel," p. 752).

Cotton, silks and woollens of all kinds do not pay the "droits de contrôle et de vérification," but only "taxe spéciale de reconnaissance," according to the rates shown in tariff, multiplied by coefficient 2 (see "Journal officiel," pp. 765 and 766).

Goods from Abyssinia (in transit) for Europe are declared for transit direct and are taxed under—

1. Droits accessoires:

- (a.) Droits de quai;
- (b.) Droits de statistique;
- (c.) Droits de tonnage;

plus

2. Droits de contrôle et de vérification;

Multiplied by coefficient 2.

Coffee, hides, &c., are declared for entry into Jibuti and are taxed under—

- (a.) *Entry, i.e., Customs—In:—*

Droits de statistique (simple only).

- (b.) *Exit, i.e., Customs—Out:—*

1. Droits accessoires:

- (a.) Droits de quai;
- (b.) Droits de statistique;
- (c.) Droits de tonnage;

2. Droits de contrôle et de vérification;

Multiplied by coefficient 2.

YEAR 1925.

On the 1st January, 1925, without previous warning, the tariff previously applied was cancelled and *ad valorem* was substituted.

This new tariff is made up of three tables:—

Table A: For certain goods arriving into or going through Jibuti (mostly importations).

Table B: For goods paying a fixed amount of duty.

Table C: For certain goods and animals leaving the colony.

The customs charges at Jibuti may be classified as follows:—

1. Droits de consommation.
2. Taxe contributive aux services rendus au commerce.
3. Droits accessoires:

- (a.) Droits de quai.
- (b.) Droits de statistique.
- (c.) Droits de tonnage.

The classifications for the customs are:—

1. Goods for consumption at Jibuti from Europe or Abyssinia.
2. Goods declared for importations to Jibuti and then re-exported.
3. Goods from Europe (in transit) for Abyssinia.
4. Goods from Abyssinia (in transit) for Europe.

Our remarks will again be limited to classifications Nos. 3 and 4 only.

Goods from Europe (in transit) for Abyssinia are taxed under—

1. Taxe contributive aux services rendus au commerce; *ad valorem* according to the rates shown in tariff.
2. Droits accessoires:

- (a.) Droits de quai;
- (b.) Droits de statistique;
- (c.) Droits de tonnage;

Multiplied by coefficient 2.

Goods from Abyssinia (in transit) for Europe are declared for entry into Jibuti and are taxed under—

(a.) Entry, i.e., Customs—In:—

1. Droits de statistique (simple only).
2. Taxe contributive aux services rendus au commerce (see "Journal officiel," pp. 322 to 326).

(b.) Exit, i.e., Customs—Out:—

Droits accessoires:

- (a.) Droits de quai;
- (b.) Droits de statistique;
- (c.) Droits de tonnage;

(Simple only).

Effect of New Tariff since January 1925.

The new scale of customs dues which came into force in January 1925 may be summarised as follows:—

(a.) Imports from Europe (in transit) through Jibuti.—Goods from Europe in transit through Jibuti were previously taxed under—

1924—Droits de contrôle et de vérification;
Droits accessoires, i.e.—

- (a.) Droits de quai;
- (b.) Droits de statistique;
- (c.) Droits de tonnage;

whereas in 1925 they are taxed under—

1925—Taxe contributive aux services rendus au commerce.
Droits accessoires:

- (a.) Droits de quai.
- (b.) Droits de statistique.
- (c.) Droits de tonnage.

The result is therefore that—

- (a.) The duty "droits de contrôle et de vérification" has been substituted by the new duty called "taxe spéciale aux services rendus au commerce," which is higher than the duty "droits de contrôle et de vérification."
- (b.) The dues called "droits accessoires," i.e.—

- (a.) Droits de quai;
- (b.) Droits de statistique;
- (c.) Droits de tonnage;

remain the same as before.

(b.) Exports from Abyssinia (in transit) through Jibuti.—Goods from Abyssinia in transit through Jibuti were previously taxed under—

1924—Entry: 1. Droits de statistique;
Exit: 2. Droits de contrôle et de vérification;
3. Droits accessoires, i.e.—

- (a.) Droits de quai;
- (b.) Droits de statistique;
- (c.) Droits de tonnage;

whereas in 1925 they are taxed under—

1925—Entry: 1. Droits de statistique.
Exit: 2. Taxe contributive aux services rendus au commerce.
3. Droits accessoires, i.e.—

- (a.) Droits de quai.
- (b.) Droits de statistique.
- (c.) Droits de tonnage.

The result is therefore that—

- (a.) The "droits de statistique" imposed on all goods entering Jibuti remain the same as before.
- (b.) The duty "droits de contrôle et de vérification" imposed on goods leaving Jibuti (i.e., based on the gross shipping weight of the goods) has been substituted by the "taxe contributive aux services rendus au commerce" on all goods entering Jibuti (i.e., based on the gross weight of goods arriving at Jibuti). The new duty is not only higher, but it is also applied on the gross weight, whereas the duty "droits de contrôle et de vérification" was applied on the gross shipping weight.
- (c.) The dues called "droits accessoires" have, generally speaking, been decreased from 50 to 75 per cent. of the figures applied in 1924.

Comparison of Customs Dues between 1924 and 1925.

It will thus be seen that the customs dues applied in 1925 are higher than those of the year 1924.

Owing to the fact that the tariff consists of several pages, comprising many different articles at different rates, it is difficult to furnish information on each individual article.

The information has therefore been based on the main commodities exported from Abyssinia and on a few articles imported into Abyssinia.

The percentage of increase is shown on the various schedules headed Imports and Exports.

[J 3566/181/1]

No. 62.

Foreign Office to Board of Trade.

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 14, 1925.

WITH reference to the letter from this Department of the 26th ultimo regarding the transit dues at Jibuti, I am directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to transmit to you herewith a copy of a despatch on this subject from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa.*

2. I am to enquire whether the Board concur in Mr. Bentinck's proposal that he should endeavour to reach a settlement by negotiations with his French colleague before further representations are made in Paris. It is possible that a settlement might be reached more expeditiously by conversations at Addis Ababa, and, unless the Board see any objection, it is not proposed to instruct His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris to take any further action in the matter until Mr. Bentinck reports the impossibility of reaching an agreement with his French colleague.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 3755/181/1]

No. 63

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 29.)

(No. 206.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, December 2, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 187 of the 16th November regarding the transit charges at Jibuti, I have the honour to report that my Italian colleague told me recently that for him the main question was whether French people paid the same duties as others. I have now ascertained that the customs duties are the same for all people and for all goods, whatever their origin. Count Colli now states that if the French are charged the same as the foreigner, he does not see that we are justified in making a big question out of this. After all, he said, our transit trade through Jibuti was not enormous. The duties were not excessive and were certainly less than those charged by the Italians in Eritrea. If they should become excessive we had established the principle by our previous protest, and we could always protest again. The British and Italian merchants would not suffer from the present duties. The Abyssinians would merely have to pay a little more for their goods. Count Colli added that Jibuti must live, and that if we were going to control the arms traffic via that port, this would mean a serious loss to its trade.

2. I understood that Count Colli had suggested or was suggesting to his Government that this question might with advantage be dropped, and I am inclined to agree.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

* No. 61.

CHAPTER V.—SLAVERY AND RAIDS.

(a.) Slavery.

[J 2756/673/1]

No. 64.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 21.)

(No. 103.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, August 17, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatches No. 27, Confidential, and No. 43 of the 1st and 13th June last, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from His Majesty's consul for North-Western Abyssinia regarding slave raids and slave trade in his district since the admission of Abyssinia to the League of Nations.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK

Enclosure in No. 64.

Consul Home to Mr. Bentinck.

Dangila, August 15, 1925.

Sir,

IN reply to your despatch dated the 1st June last, I have the honour to report that, to the best of my knowledge, no slave raids have occurred in North-West Abyssinia, since the admission of Abyssinia to the League of Nations in September 1923, other than as recorded in my intelligence notes written on the 24th February, 1925 (copy sent to the Director of Intelligence at Khartum). I see that the relevant extract was inserted in your despatch No. 43, Confidential, dated the 13th June last to the Foreign Office.

2. As regards the slave trade generally in North-West Abyssinia, I invite further reference to my memorandum dated the 22nd March, 1924, copies of which I submitted on that date to the Foreign Office, your predecessor, and the Director of Intelligence at Khartum. There is stricter control of the toll gates on the south of the Blue Nile in 1925. A result is that the price of slaves in Gojjam is higher than hitherto. At Dangila, in the north of Agaumdir, the price of very black slaves is as follows:—

Male (about 10 years old) ...	About 55 dollars.
Female (about 10 years old) ...	About 50 dollars.
Male (about 20 years old) ...	About 65 dollars.
Female (about 20 years old) ...	About 95 dollars.

The exchange is about 8 dollars to the £ sterling. Lighter-skinned slaves are cheaper, as being less in demand. There is no difficulty in purchasing twenty slaves in a few days at Dangila.

I am addressing copy of this despatch to the Director of Intelligence at Khartum.

I have, &c.

A. D. HOME.

[J 2764/673/1]

No. 65.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 21.)

(No. 113. Very Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, August 22, 1925.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 124 of the 6th ultimo, enclosing copy of a despatch to His Majesty's Ambassador at Paris respecting the possibility of the League of Nations deciding to send a commission to enquire into slavery conditions

[14106]

G 2

in Abyssinia, I have the honour to suggest that, if you approve, the following proposal might be submitted to Sir Frederick Lugard for consideration:—

2. That if the League of Nations should despatch to this country a commission as suggested, it is possible that such a commission would only be allowed to see and hear exactly what the Abyssinian Government might wish it to see and hear—neither more nor less. If, on the other hand, certain reliable and discreet delegates, preferably American, Dutch or Scandinavian, could be despatched unofficially by the League on a shooting, zoological, ornithological or photographic expedition to this country, they would probably discover a great many facts regarding the true state of slavery, which might be useful for the purposes of the League. I make this suggestion somewhat diffidently, as I realise that secrecy and discretion would be essential to the success of such an enterprise, and I do not know if such a thing would be possible if undertaken by the League.

3. At the same time, I am bound to point out that it is one thing to draw up reports and recommendations to the League, but to put such recommendations into practice in Abyssinia is quite another matter. So far as I can see, there are two ways by which practical results might be obtained:—

(i.) Compulsion, either moral or physical. At the end of my despatch No. 114 of to-day, I have suggested a means whereby it might be possible for us to exercise effective compulsion; or

(ii.) Gradual enlightenment along Christian lines, so as to develop a conscience and ideals amongst all classes of the people.

4. We do not hear of slavery in Japan, although I must confess that conditions far worse than slavery still exist in certain places there. Still, it cannot be denied that, on the whole, Japan is far ahead of Abyssinia. Europe and America have flooded Japan with Christian teachers, and British and American ideals are fast penetrating into its dark corners. Abyssinia, on the other hand, excepting for a few French Roman Catholic missionaries and one Swede, has hitherto been severely neglected. Since the war a few American, British and Danish missionaries and a representative of the Bible Society have started work on a diminutive scale, and the benefits of this work are already beginning to appear in this benighted country. Ras Tafari may, to a certain extent, be said to be one of the results of the work of the French Roman Catholics. The Abyssinian interpreter at His Majesty's Legation is a product of the Swedish missionaries. Dr. Martin has enjoyed the benefits of British education in India. When I was in Japan there were, I believe, said to be over 100,000 Japanese Christians—the result of missionary enterprise. If 1,000 such men as Ras Tafari, Dr. Martin and my interpreter could be produced in this country, civilisation might penetrate and advance.

5. I think the question is worth considering whether the money which would be spent on the despatch to Abyssinia of commissioners for reporting, advising, controlling might not be as well, or even better and more effectively, expended in grants for hospitals and schools run on Christian lines under European and American management. Attention would, of course, have to be paid to local prejudices, and care taken to avoid, as far as possible, antagonising the Abyssinian Church, for the reactionary and priest-ridden party, which dreads enlightenment and advance above all things, would certainly be hostile to anything calculated to improve conditions. But hostility has given place to toleration in Japan, and the day may come when a similar state of affairs will be reached in Abyssinia. Progress along the lines suggested above would certainly be slow and less spectacular, perhaps, than by other methods, but it might be surer in the end.

I have, &c.
C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 2764/673/1]

No. 66.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 238.)
Sir,

WHEN you wrote your despatch No. 113 of the 22nd August you were unaware of the outcome of the labours of the League of Nations Slavery Commission. After the presentation of their report Abyssinia was represented on a sub-committee of the Sixth Committee of the Assembly which produced a draft protocol or convention open for

Foreign Office, October 15, 1925.

signature and ratification to all States. As you will see from my despatch No. 237, this protocol will not be discussed in detail until next year's meeting of the Assembly. Thus, for the present at least, slavery is unlikely to give rise to intervention by the League in Abyssinia, and in the circumstances you will agree that it is unnecessary to consider such a suggestion as that put forward in the first three paragraphs of your despatch.

2. In the remainder of your despatch you advocate greater missionary activity in Abyssinia. An opportunity was recently taken to bring your proposals to the notice of Mr. Oldham, of the Conference of Missionary Societies, who is shortly going to America. Mr. Oldham stated that both British and American Missionary Associations are at present short of funds and are seeking to restrict their activities rather than to find new fields. The claim of Abyssinia was none the less emphasised, and the advantages of associating medical and educational work with purely religious teaching were pointed out, whilst the success of the children's dispensaries in Egypt, which were founded by Lady Cromer, was quoted as an example of what could be done in this direction. Money being the chief difficulty, the possibility was suggested of inducing the Anti-Slavery Society, who are believed to dispose of large funds, to employ them for the propagation of civilisation in Abyssinia on practical lines and thus promote the ends aimed at by the society more efficaciously than by agitation in Europe against slavery, the echoes of which merely aggravate the Abyssinians. Mr. Oldham, who is a member of the council of the society, was not unfavourably impressed by this suggestion, which he promised to bear in mind.

I am, &c.
AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3076/673/1]

No. 67.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 19.)

(No. 137. Very Confidential.)

Addis Ababa, September 28, 1925.

Sir,
WITH reference to my despatch No. 37 of the 1st June last, I have the honour to transmit herewith a memorandum compiled by Mr. Ph. Zaphiro, Oriental secretary, regarding the trade in slaves at Tajura, in French Somaliland. The information was obtained by Mr. Zaphiro when, under my instructions, he recently visited Jibuti.

2. I shall have occasion to consider the recommendation of a vice-consul at Jibuti in another despatch.

I am forwarding a copy of this despatch and enclosure to His Majesty's Resident at Aden.

I have, &c.
C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure in No. 67.

Slave-Trading at Tajura, French Dankali Country.

(Very Confidential.)

I HAVE been informed from very reliable sources that the trading in slaves at Tajura, instead of diminishing, has lately increased. My informant, who has just returned from Tajura, gave me the following information:—

About the 15th July last a caravan of over eighty slaves reached Tajura from Dessie (Wollo, Abyssinia), consisting of girls, elderly women and young men. The owner of the slaves was a Mahometan, from Jima, named Mohamed Abdul, a "nagadi" (trader), with sixty mules loaded with coffee to be sold in Tajura. At the same time he brought down the slaves to be exchanged for rifles. It appears that a great number of Fusil Gras rifles are in the hands of the Arabs in Yemen, captured or left behind by the Turks when they evacuated the Arab country. Those rifles now are imported by the Arabs to Tajura in exchange for slaves. A boy or girl slave from 10 to 25 years old fetches six rifles; a woman from 30 years upwards, four rifles; and a man over 20, five rifles and 500 cartridges. These rifles are sold in Abyssinia. The present price of a Fusil Gras rifle is 80 dollars (£10) and four cartridges to a dollar (2s. 6d.). The name

of the place where the exchange takes place is Kobo, about 60 miles north-west of Tajura, in the Dankali country. The Sultan of Tajura gets a rifle for each slave leaving his port. When the slaves are brought down to Tajura they are clothed like Arabs, and the women likewise, with covered faces like the Arab women. They are kept in different houses about 10 miles inland from Tajura, and when the opportunity arrives they are taken in dhows (small sailing boats), ten at a time, across to Arabia. I have been told that they have agents in Aden, who inform them about the movements of our gunboat. It seems that one of these sailing boats was nearly caught by one of our gunboats going to Aden last month, but unfortunately they escaped. The owner of the boat told my informant that when they saw the gunboat they thought they were lost, but the gunboat followed her course without noticing them. Lately every month forty to fifty slaves have been sent to Arabia. My informant said that the French at Jibuti never visit Tajura nowadays, there is no control at all, and the Sultan of Tajura is not friendly with the present Governor of Jibuti. Before, it appears, there was a trade in goat and sheep skins between Tajura and Jibuti, but now all the trade has been diverted to Assab, as the Italians are taking next to nothing in taxes, and the present Governor of Jibuti does not take any interest in what is going on in Tajura. It is very essential for us, if possible, to have a paid vice-consul to watch Jibuti. Of course, he must know Arabic and French. Any consular officer who has served in Egypt could fill the post.

P. P. Z.

[J 3077/673/1]

No. 68.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 19.)

(No. 138. Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, September 28, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 113 of the 22nd ultimo, I have the honour to report that, on the occasion of my recent visit to Harar, I enquired of the French Roman Catholic bishop, and a Maltese father from the Aroussi country who happened also to be at Harar, as to the attitude of their Abyssinian converts towards the question of slavery.

2. They told me that the Roman Catholic Church absolutely vetoed trade in slaves under threat of excommunication. They did not feel able to get domestic slavery, which exists practically everywhere in this country, abolished all at once. The proclamations of the Abyssinian Government since their entry into the League of Nations had certainly done good in reducing the trade, but domestic slavery would not be easy to abolish. The Roman Catholic Church urged upon their converts kind treatment of slaves. Such treatment, of course, differed in each case. They encouraged the slave-owners to release a certain number of slaves at death by leaving them land or a house or some means of livelihood. It would be impossible to liberate slaves by turning them out into the street or country. They would not know what to do or where to go, and many would most probably degenerate into robbers and brigands. Their intellect had suffered from generations of slavery, and many would be too stupid to provide for themselves. A remarkable difference existed between the intellect of the children of a man by a slave woman or by his free wife. The Roman Catholic Church attached the greatest importance to the slave-family, and they endeavoured to arrange so that slave children should be the property of their slave father, and not of the slave father's master. Custom and tradition, they said, made it essential for a big man to own a large number of slaves. They were necessary for his prestige. If it were possible to replace these by hired servants, many Abyssinians would welcome the change, as they could get far more work done by hired servants.

3. The Abyssinian, I may here remark, urges in defence of slavery that if he finds an abandoned child, and takes it to his house, feeds and clothes it, is it not natural that the child, when it gets bigger, should return this hospitality by work?

4. The bishop estimated the numbers of Roman Catholics in Abyssinia at about 10,000, and, if Eritrea be included, at double the figure. Great progress had been made in the Kaffa district to the south-west of Addis Ababa. He said that one of the three branches into which the Abyssinian Christian Church was divided was closely akin to the Roman Catholic Church, and, in fact, probably was originally

Roman Catholic, so that the people were very ready to return to the Roman Catholic fold. The Abuna was, the bishop said, bitterly opposed to his work, and consequently the bishop never came to Addis Ababa.

5. The bishop professed to hope that the distribution of the Scriptures by the British and Foreign Bible Society and others, and the reading of the New Testament, instead of merely the Old, might gradually succeed in enlightening the people in spite of the opposition of the priests.

6. The bishop volunteered the suggestion that the League of Nations might with advantage send a deputation to this country which should travel throughout its length and breadth, and draw up a kind of programme of reforms for introduction by the Government. The representatives of the League of Nations would, of course, have to take account of local conditions and prejudices, and the programme would require tactful presentation to the Government, and must not be forced upon the latter.

7. Owing to their recent arrival, the influence of the Swedish evangelical missionaries is at present comparatively small. They aim at creating a conscience amongst their followers, and try to influence them against slavery in any form.

8. The French consul at Diré Dawa, who has resided there for the last eleven or twelve years, was hopeful of a better state of affairs being brought about by the second generation of educated Abyssinians. The French school at Diré Dawa, he said, had about 200 Abyssinian pupils, one of whom was heard rebuking his father for keeping slaves. M. Lachèze, however, was pessimistic of much progress under the present régime. He suggested a mandate being given to some country by the League of Nations, but admitted that such a step would be accompanied by bloodshed. In this connection I have the honour to refer to my despatch No. 130 of the 9th instant.

9. I should here mention that in paragraph 4 of my despatch No. 113 I referred to over 100,000 Japanese Christians. These were Protestants only. There were besides a great many belonging to the Russian Orthodox branch of the Church, and probably more Roman Catholics than all the others combined.

10. I understand that when my predecessor once spoke to Ras Tafari about slavery in Abyssinia, the latter replied that it existed also in the Sudan and in Kenya. For my future guidance I should be glad if I could be informed of the real conditions in those colonies.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 3076/673/1]

No. 69.

Foreign Office to Admiralty.

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 28, 1925.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to transmit to you herewith copies of the correspondence which has passed between this Department, His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa and Sir Frederick Lugard regarding the export of slaves from Abyssinia.*

2. It will be seen that in his memorandum enclosed in Addis Ababa despatch No. 137 of the 28th ultimo, Mr. Zaphiro alleges that the slave trade through Tajura has recently increased in volume and that slave dhows plying between that port and Arabia have lately found it possible to elude the vigilance of the Red Sea slave patrol. The fact that certain dhows have succeeded in making good their passage across the Red Sea is no doubt partly due to the abnormal situation in the neighbourhood of Jeddah which presumably prevents the patrol from spending as much time as usual in the southern portion of the Red Sea.

3. Mr. Zaphiro does not specify the sources from which he obtained his information and, before taking any action in the matter, Mr. Chamberlain would be glad to learn whether their Lordships consider that the report about the passage of slaves through the territory of the Sultan of Tajura is likely to be well founded and, if so, whether any steps could be taken to enable the Red Sea patrol to cope with the traffic.

* No. 67 and Part III, Nos. 88 and 102.

4. If Mr. Zaphiro's allegations are borne out by information received in your Department, Mr. Chamberlain would propose to draw the attention of the French Government to the irregularities reported to exist in territory for whose administration they are responsible and to invite them to take such action as may be practicable to put an end both to the trade in slaves and to the illicit traffic in arms.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 3077/673/1]

No. 70.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 257.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 29, 1925.

IN the last paragraph of your despatch No. 138 of the 28th September you referred to a statement made by Ras Taffari to your predecessor to the effect that slavery existed in the Sudan and in Kenya.

2 I transmit to you, herewith, copies of the statements respecting slavery in those countries communicated to the League of Nations by the Colonial Office and the Sudan Government. From the material supplied in these documents you will have no difficulty in showing, should it ever be necessary, that conditions in Kenya or the Sudan afford no ground for analogy with those existing in Abyssinia.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3332/673/1]

No. 71.

Admiralty to Foreign Office.—(Received November 16.)

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Admiralty, November 13, 1925.

WITH reference to your letter of the 28th ultimo, forwarding copies of correspondence on the subject of the export of slaves from Abyssinia, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to forward the following observations for the information of the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs.

2. My Lords agree that the fact that dhows have succeeded in crossing the Red Sea is partly due to the abnormal situation at Jeddah which has prevented His Majesty's ship from spending as much time as usual in the southern portion of the Red Sea.

3 It would appear from the reports that Tajura is a place from which slaves can be shipped without much likelihood of interference, but my Lords consider that the steps to prevent it could be taken much more effectively by the French Government. In this connection I am to request that you will remind the Secretary of State that for a considerable portion of the year only one sloop is available for service in the Red Sea owing to the necessity of one proceeding periodically to Malta to refit.

4. Before considering the question of reinforcing the patrol by destroyers from the Mediterranean, my Lords would prefer to await the result of the representations which the Secretary of State proposes to make to the French Government. I am to point out, however, that on two occasions recently (May and October 1924) a division of destroyers has been sent to the Red Sea to reinforce the sloops temporarily during comparatively cool weather, and the expense involved on each occasion, due to canal dues and extra fuel, was approximately £11,500. Destroyers are not suitable vessels for extended work in the Red Sea, and my Lords consider it undesirable to make use of them for this purpose, except in an emergency.

5. With reference to paragraph 4 of your letter under reply, I am to state that the Admiralty have no information regarding Mr. Zaphiro's allegations apart from that received by your Department.

I am, &c.

ALEX FLINT.

[J 3345/673/1]

No. 72.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 16)

(No. 160. Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, October 15, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 138, Confidential, of the 28th ultimo, I have the honour to report that my Italian colleague tells me he recently reported to his Government, for reference, as I understood, to the League of Nations, on the conditions of slavery in this country. According to Count Colli there has been no improvement since the admission of Abyssinia to the League. The proclamations issued since that date have remained a dead letter. I observed that though slavery existed as ever, I had understood from the Roman Catholic Bishop at Harar that the trade in slaves had certainly diminished. Count Colli would not admit this. According to him the trade had continued just as before. In this he agrees with Mr. Zaphiro (see enclosure in my despatch No. 37, Confidential, of the 1st June last). Count Colli maintained that the priests were biased in their judgment by long residence in this country, and in any case they would never dare to criticise the powers that be. He declared that any day he wished at short notice he could purchase numbers of slaves without the slightest difficulty. He had never yet heard of a single case of anyone in this country having been punished for buying or selling slaves. Subsequently he admitted that there had been one case about a year or two ago in which certain people had been condemned to death for capturing slaves on the eastern frontier and selling them in Arabia. This sentence, Count Colli explained, was intended to impress the foreigners. In the country, he maintained, the trade continues with impunity. He was sending home photographs of caravans with slaves being conducted along the routes, tied together with chains around their necks. He blamed the League of Nations for their inactivity. They had admitted Abyssinia to membership upon certain conditions, but they had never taken the trouble to investigate in order to see if those conditions were being carried out. Count Colli said that the Italian Roman Catholic missionaries working in the west had, in the course of many years, succeeded in freeing ten slaves, and this they had only been able to accomplish by first of all buying the slaves from their masters.

2. The chief offenders as regards the slavery question are, I am told, the Empress and the Abuna.

3. Count Colli, after many years' residence in this country, is very despondent. Under the Emperor Menelik it was possible to accomplish something. Like all my colleagues and others acquainted with this country, Count Colli can see no hope of accomplishing anything as matters stand at present. Yet, he says, he cannot sit quietly here drawing his salary and doing no good, nor can he continually report to his Government that nothing can be done. His Government will naturally expect to see some result from his mission to Abyssinia.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 3332/673/1]

No. 72A.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).

(No. 3837.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, November 20, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 3550 of the 29th ultimo regarding the export of slaves through Tajura, I transmit to your Lordship herewith a copy of a letter from the Admiralty,* from which it appears that the Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty are unable to supplement or confirm the information contained in Mr. Zaphiro's report.

2. In the circumstances formal representations to the French Government are hardly warranted, but in view of the importance of leaving nothing undone which may help to put an end to the slave trade, I feel that the French Government should know that His Majesty's Government have received a report which causes them some concern. Unless you see any objection you should take an early opportunity of conveying

* No. 71.

informally to the French Government the gist of Mr. Zaphiro's report. The French Government might be asked whether they consider that there is any foundation for the allegations, and, if so, what action is in their view best calculated to prevent the continuance of the abuses reported.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3429/673/1]

No. 73.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 23.)

(No. 176. Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, October 28, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatches Nos. 89 and 160 of the 30th July and 15th instant respectively, I have the honour to report that on the 14th instant I received a very lengthy private letter from His Majesty's consul at Maji dated the 22nd March, 1925, regarding a journey he had made through "certain unknown districts" lying to the north and north-west of Maji as far as Gorei. As the letter covers about forty type-written pages, it is too long to forward the whole, but I have the honour to transmit certain extracts regarding the slave trade in the south-western district of Abyssinia.

2. Mr. Hodson paints a gloomy picture, maintaining that former reports on the conditions of slave trade have not been exaggerated. He quotes facts to prove how little truth is to be found in the articles published in the press stating that reports on the slave trade has been exaggerated. In this I think my Italian colleague, who has had long experience in this country, will agree. I agree with Mr. Hodson that Ras Tafari would gladly put a stop to this iniquitous practice if he had the power, but the Empress and the Council of Advisers may be trusted to take care that His Imperial Highness does not get the necessary power.

3. In another place Mr. Hodson records a conversation with Dejazmatch Taye, the ruler to the north-west of Maji. He is the grandson of the Emperor Menelik's brother, and thus by blood he had a better claim to the throne than has Ras Tafari. Amongst other things he told Mr. Hodson that the whole place had been devastated by slave raiders, and that from Curafarda (marked on the War Office map printed in 1925, Geographical Section, General Staff, No. 2871, at the intersection of the 35th meridian with the 7th parallel) alone over 1,000 of his tenants had been captured for purposes of slavery. The country had been so depopulated that he thought it almost impossible to build it up again.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure in No. 73.

Extracts from Mr. Hodson's Letter of March 22, 1925, addressed to His Majesty's Minister.

I FIND that former reports on the conditions of the slave trade have not been exaggerated. The following tribes have been practically exterminated: Maji, Gemira, Kaffa, Shako, Mocha and Tirma. There are only a few hundreds left who have escaped by hiding in the forests, where before there used to be thousands and thousands.

With regard to the Tishana tribe, probably one quarter are left, who in their turn have become slave raiders as I have mentioned before.

On this trip I did not see a single native village except one or two close to Tamanjaye, and I think this shows how thoroughly the Abyssinians have done their work.

The Abyssinian villages are small, and in every one I passed through I can honestly say I did not see a single Abyssinian householder who did not have three or four small children recently acquired. I made careful enquiries, and found that what happens is this: When an Abyssinian finds a few families who through old age, sickness or some other reason have not run away or been captured, he collects them to do his ploughing and other household work. Later on he demands from them taxes. These

poor creatures, being poverty stricken and not having any money at all, have nothing wherewith to pay the tax; the Abyssinian takes from them their children in its place. This appears to be almost worse than raiding, as these people are under the protection of their masters. I have taken photographs to prove these statements.

What a scandal the whole thing is! The Belgian atrocities could not have been worse. What makes the matter worse is that these tribes are of fine physique, having their own laws and customs, and are by no means niggers in the accepted sense. The Mocha and Kaffa people, for instance, are almost Mongolian in colour and appearance, and I am sure were never intended by nature to act as serfs to anyone. I have been told by eye-witnesses of the horrors that happened in the past. Enormous gangs of tiny children, together with men and women, taken from their own particular villages and exposed to all the hardships of long treks; driven through this wet and cold country with very little food and no clothes, some in chains, and, when ill or tired, left to die on the road. When the raids take place the villages are surrounded in the dark by the raiders, blowing trumpets and uttering bloodthirsty yells to stampede the inhabitants. The huts are then set on fire and the old men and women ruthlessly speared or shot as they rush out panic stricken, only the younger ones being of sufficient value to capture. These raids are even now occurring.

Certain Abyssinian outlaws have put in their lot with the Tishana and help them in their raids. Slave traders too are ever welcome in their country, as they purchase the slaves that the Tishana capture and bring them down the supplies and goods they require. The Tishana now raid far and wide, being well supplied with arms and ammunition, and their spies and intelligence are excellent. During my first tour they even raided as far as Tirma, Beyru, Maji, &c.

The current prices in the Tishana country for slaves when I was at Sire were as follows:—

50 cartridges: 1 small slave and 1 large.
1 Mauser: 4 slaves.
1 Fusil Gras: 1 slave.

The slave traders come from Jimma, buy the slaves at Tishana, take them back to Jimma, and sell them there. If the gate-keepers are troublesome, they give them a bribe, when they are allowed to pass through.

It will be understood how it makes my blood boil when I read the articles or letters sent to the press stating that the reports on the slave trade are grossly exaggerated, that slaves are well treated and looked after, in fact making their whole position so *couleur de rose* that one might almost parody the words of Agrippa to St. Paul: "Almost thou persuadest me to be a slave." I have taken the trouble to find out who are responsible for these reports, and I find they are written by people who have never been in the districts they write about, and I am perfectly certain they supply these accounts to curry favour with the Abyssinian Government for their own ends. It is quite obvious that no one who has not been to these districts can write about them any more than Ras Tafari, who has only been to London, can write on the conditions in a coal mine in Lancashire. I should like to ask these comfortable well-fed individuals how they would like it if their children were seized if they could not pay their income tax; or if they would appreciate being driven naked through the forests and mud of Kaffa?

It should also be clearly pointed out that the highest sounding laws in connection with slavery recently promulgated by the Abyssinian Government are merely to deceive. No slave has been repatriated or ever will be repatriated, and if a commission of Abyssinian judges was sent to the south-west to release slaves I can tell you beforehand exactly what would happen. They would seize all the poor people's slaves and afterwards share them with the Governor of the province.

In fairness to the Abyssinians, I am convinced in my own mind that they look upon all these subject races as a kind of blackbeetle and unworthy of any consideration. It does not occur to them that they are doing wrong.

One knows that Ras Tafari is genuine and does wish to stop the slave traffic. I can assure you he has not a single friend in this matter, and any chief you talk to will tell you the same thing, namely, that on no account whatsoever will they ever give up their slaves. They say: "Our ancestors had slaves and we will have slaves, and we will die before we give them up!"

One cannot but admire the way they have hoodwinked the Powers in this matter, just as in the same way they managed to be accepted into the League of Nations.

[14106]

H 2

You may say, on the other hand: "How do you account for the fact that the large Boran tribe in the south has not been devastated in the same way?" The matter is really quite simple. The Boran, who are Gallas, ever since they were conquered, have been under one chief, Fitaurari Hapta Giorgis, Minister for War, himself a Galla, and certainly the strongest man in Abyssinia. His own officers have always been in charge of this province, and he has always given the strictest instructions that the inhabitants were to be looked after, knowing quite well that if they were devastated as the other provinces have been, he would lose the large annual revenue he receives from the taxes they pay. In addition, the Boran have many sections of their tribe living across the border in British territory, and he has had the sense to realise that if they were oppressed too much they would flee to our side. On the other hand, on the south-west, the tribes who live there have nowhere to flee, for if they cross the border into British territory they would at once be murdered by the Gellaba or Turkana.

I do not think that people are capturing slaves in British territory. The Gellaba, aided by Abyssinians, are continually raiding into our territory when they murder in a brutal fashion all the women and children they can. The same applies to the Toposa, aided by Swahili and Abyssinian outlaws. It is perhaps a moot point as to which is the better, to be murdered or captured as a slave.

[J 3445/673/1]

No. 74.

Mr. Phipps to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 25.)

(No. 2491.)

HIS Majesty's representative at Paris presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of a semi-official letter to M. Berthelot regarding the export of slaves from Abyssinia.

Paris, November 24, 1925.

Enclosure in No. 74.

Mr. Phipps to M. Berthelot.

Mon cher Ambassadeur,

Paris, le 24 novembre 1925.

JE viens d'être chargé d'attirer officiellement votre attention sur la sérieuse inquiétude qu'éprouve le Foreign Office en raison des dernières nouvelles reçues concernant la traite des esclaves par le port de Tadjoura sur la Côte française des Somalis.

D'après des informations cueillies d'une source sûre, dans laquelle on peut avoir la plus grande confiance, le trafic par ce port, au lieu de diminuer, s'accroît. Il paraît que les Arabes de l'Yémen sont en possession d'un grand nombre de fusils, type Gras, que les Turcs ont abandonnés lors de leur évacuation du pays. Ces fusils sont maintenant envoyés par les Arabes à Tadjoura pour être échangés contre des esclaves. On vend un esclave au-dessous de 25 ans pour 6 fusils, pour une femme âgée de 30 ans on donne 4 fusils, et pour un homme au-dessus de 20 ans 5 fusils et 500 cartouches. La valeur actuelle d'un fusil, type Gras, est 80 dollars (£10) et 4 cartouches valent 1 dollar. Ces fusils sont vendus en Abyssinie.

L'endroit où l'échange des esclaves contre les fusils s'effectue serait Kobo, qui se trouve à peu près à 60 milles au nord-est de Tadjoura, dans le pays des Dankali. Le Sultan de Tadjoura recevrait un fusil en raison de chaque esclave qui quitte son port. Ces esclaves, qui sont amenés de Tadjoura vêtus comme des Arabes, sont expédiés en Arabie dans des dhows, dix à la fois.

Il paraît que les relations entre le Sultan de Tadjoura et les autorités françaises à Djibouti ne sont pas très cordiales et que le contrôle français sur le port de Tadjoura est devenu minime.

C'est seulement dans le but de faire tout ce qui est possible pour mettre un terme à la traite des esclaves que mon Gouvernement a cru devoir porter ces faits à la connaissance du Gouvernement français, lequel, nous le savons bien, partage nos sentiments au sujet de ce trafic néfaste.

Je vous saurais gré de bien vouloir me faire savoir si les informations dont vous disposez confirment celles reçues par le Foreign Office. Dans ce cas, mon Gouvernement serait heureux de connaître les vues du Gouvernement français au sujet des meilleurs moyens pour supprimer ces abus.

Je vous prie, &c.

ERIC PHIPPS.

[J 3345/673/1]

No. 75.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 1795. Confidential.)

Foreign Office, November 25, 1925.

Sir,

I TRANSMIT to you herewith a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa, informing me that the Italian Minister at that capital has recently reported to his Government on slavery in Abyssinia.*

2. I shall be glad if your Excellency will make such discreet enquiries as may be possible and inform me what use, if any, the Italian Government intend to make of the report which Count Colli says he has submitted and, particularly, whether this report is likely to be referred to the League of Nations as anticipated by Mr. Bentinck.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3516/673/1]

No. 76.

Mr. Phipps to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 2.)

(No. 2548.)

HIS Majesty's representative at Paris presents his compliments to the Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, and has the honour to transmit herewith copy of a note from M. Berthelot respecting the export of slaves from Abyssinia.

Paris, December 1, 1925.

Enclosure in No. 76.

M. Berthelot to Mr. Phipps.

Paris, le 28 novembre 1925.

Mon cher Ministre,

PAR votre lettre du 24 de ce mois, vous avez bien voulu me faire savoir que vous étiez chargé d'attirer officiellement mon attention sur l'inquiétude éprouvée par le Foreign Office, en raison des dernières nouvelles qu'il a reçues au sujet de la traite des esclaves qui s'effectuerait sur la Côte des Somalis par le port de Tadjoura.

Le Département des Affaires étrangères n'ignore pas que ce trafic se pratique malheureusement encore sur toute cette partie de la côte d'Afrique et n'a pas manqué de s'en préoccuper. J'insiste à nouveau pour faire compléter les renseignements déjà demandés à cet égard et qui, joints à ceux dont le Gouvernement britannique dispose, pourront permettre une action répressive efficace.

Je vous prie, &c.

BERTHELOT.

* No. 72.

[J 3429/673/1]

No. 77.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 1854. Confidential.)

Foreign Office, December 7, 1925.

Sir,

WITH reference to my confidential despatch No. 1795 of the 25th ultimo, I transmit to you herewith a copy of a further despatch from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa forwarding a report on slavery and the slave trade in the south-western parts of Abyssinia.*

2. The situation disclosed in the extracts from Mr. Consul Hodson's letter to Mr. Bentinck unfortunately occasions me little surprise. I cannot, however, allow information received from so authoritative a source as Mr. Hodson, who only records what he has himself seen during a recent tour, simply to be pigeonholed. In these circumstances I shall be glad if you will bring the substance of Mr. Hodson's report to the confidential notice of the Italian Government, explaining that its accuracy can be relied upon. You should ascertain whether Count Colli's reports, which formed the subject of my despatch under reference, are of a confirmatory character, and, if so, whether the Italian Government would be prepared to join with us in bringing the facts disclosed confidentially to the notice of the French Government with the suggestion that the three Governments should raise the matter at a confidential meeting of the Council of the League when it assembles in March next.

3. Your Excellency should make it clear that I have no wish to pillory Abyssinia or to raise any public outcry about slavery conditions there. On the contrary, recognising how powerless the Abyssinian Government are to put matters right, my hope is that the Council of the League, after considering the matter in confidence, may be able to devise some means of helping Ras Tafari and the Abyssinian Government without wounding their *amour-propre* or infringing their sovereignty.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

(b.) Raids.

[J 2755/897/1]

No. 78.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 21.)

(No. 96.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, August 5, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 57 of the 29th June last, I have the honour to transmit herewith copy of a despatch from Mr. A. D. Home, His Majesty's consul at Dangila, regarding the recent raid into the Sudan.

2. Mr. Home's despatch is a reply to the one which I addressed to him, a copy of which was enclosed in my despatch No. 57 to you, and records an interview with Ras Hailu on the subject.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure in No. 78.

Consul Home to Mr. Bentinck.

Sir,

Dangila, July 31, 1925.

WITH reference to your despatch dated the 29th June, I have the honour to report that I had an unexpected opportunity on the 9th instant to make strong representations to Ras Hailu on the subject of Fitawrari Zallaka's poaching expedition into the Sudan.

I reminded Ras Hailu that I had had occasion to make strong representations to him in 1923 regarding poaching expeditions sent by Fitawrari Zallaka into Sudan territory, and that they had not resulted, as requested by me, in either the surrender

* No. 73.

of the ivory or their discontinuance. I told him that I had, therefore, considered it necessary to report Fitawrari Zallaka's expedition in 1925 direct to you for action with the Central Government.

Ras Hailu protested, with the oath, "May Mr. Home die if I knew it!" that he was unaware of the expedition. In reply, I observed that it was said freely in Agaumdir that Fitawrari Zallaka had reported the success of his hunting to him. He answered that he would deal with the matter. To this, I replied that I wanted some more definite assurance from him to take to you at Addis Ababa. I told him that I expected him, after verifying the accuracy of my statement, to dismiss Fitawrari Zallaka from the chiefship of his district and to hand over all the ivory for the Sudan Government.

I also informed him that I had reason to believe that one Kitaw, a retainer of the notorious Fitawrari Dasta Tessama, a small robber chief on the south-west of Lake Tana, had gone to hunt in the Sudan in 1925, and shot an elephant there.

Finally, Ras Hailu agreed to act as urged by me, and in accordance therewith to send the ivory to the heir to the throne at Addis Ababa for return to you on behalf of the Sudan Government. I remarked that I was aware that there were two large pairs of tusks among the spoils of the chase, and that they would be expected among the others.

I should observe that the ivory cannot be sent to Addis Ababa until December, when the River Blue Nile will be fordable.

In regard to the third paragraph of your despatch, unnumbered, dated the 29th June, Fitawrari Zallaka's men hunted in parties, as usual, and not all together. The River Dinder-Khor Galegu area is practically uninhabited; and the difficulties of the Sudan Government in dealing with numerous Abyssinian poaching parties there are considerable.

As regards the second paragraph of your despatch No. 57, dated the 29th June last, to the Foreign Office (copy of which you forwarded to Khartum), Ras Hailu is notoriously acquisitive, and no doubt regards my activities regarding poaching as "getting into his pocket." He loves ivory for its market value, and buffalo horns and giraffe skins as trophies. He has no altruistic sentiments, but he sees advantages to himself in friendship with the English; and I therefore do not consider that he can be regarded as ill-disposed towards us. I should observe that, under pressure from me, he has settled the loan of £5,000 received from the Sudan Government.

I am forwarding copies of this despatch to the Director of Intelligence, Sudan Government.

I have, &c.

A. D. HOME.

[J 2763/897/1]

No. 79.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 21.)

(No. 112.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, August 22, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 96 of the 5th instant, I have the honour to report that, shortly after Mr. Home's arrival here, I took him, on the 30th July, to pay his respects to Ras Tafari. In the course of the interview I suggested to His Imperial Highness that he might like to hear direct from Mr. Home all that he could tell him about the recent Abyssinian raid into the Sudan, as my Government attached importance to the question. On His Imperial Highness assenting, Mr. Home explained the whole position to him in Amharic, and I now transmit a record of the conversation which took place on that occasion.

2. I trust that I am right in assuming from your despatch No. 139 of the 17th ultimo that you approve the demands made in my note to Ras Tafari on the 15th June, and repeated by Mr. Home in his conversation on the 30th July, namely, that those responsible for the deed should be punished, and compelled to return to the Government of the Sudan (through His Majesty's Legation) the ivory which they had stolen.

3. I am forwarding copy of this despatch to Khartum.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure in No. 79.

Note on Mr. Home's Conversation with Ras Tafari on July 30, 1925.

WHEN His Majesty's Minister gave me the opportunity to speak with Ras Tafari on the 30th July, 1925, regarding poaching expeditions from North-West Abyssinia to the River Dinder-Khor Galegu area in the Sudan, I spoke as follows:—

"On arrival in North-West Abyssinia early in 1920, I became acquainted with Fitawrari Zallaka. I told him that I was aware that for many years his retainers had poached in the Sudan, and I gave him a friendly warning against sending poaching parties there in the future. He denied having done so in the past.

"I made strong representations to Ras Hailu in 1923 against recent poaching in the Sudan by Fitawrari Zallaka's bands, and I informed him of the number of elephants, &c., shot. I requested him to stop these activities of Fitawrari Zallaka and to surrender the ivory to me for the Sudan Government. Ras Hailu replied that he would be angry with Fitawrari Zallaka, and issue a proclamation against violation of the frontier by hunters; he did not hand over the ivory.

"When I was absent from Dangila between February and May 1925, Fitawrari Zallaka took a large number of hunters to the Sudan. When I heard of it, I did not make representations to Ras Hailu as my previous representations had not resulted in the surrender of the ivory, and I therefore considered it necessary to report the occurrence for direct action by His Majesty's Minister with the Central Government. When I passed through Debra Markos in the middle of July, I saw Ras Hailu, and obtained, under pressure, his promise that, subject to verification of the frontier violation, he would dismiss Fitawrari Zallaka from the chiefship of his district and send the ivory after the rainy season to Ras Tafari for surrender to His Majesty's Minister. I told Ras Hailu that two of the elephants had large tusks, which would be looked for among the other tusks when surrendered."

Ras Tafari, in reply, said that he would enquire from Ras Hailu the result of his action.

I then observed that, as regards poaching done by Dejach Ayalewu's officials, I had made representations to him and expected that he would take suitable action. I added that I had found Dejach Ayalewu to be prompt in dealing with matters referred to him.

*Addis Ababa, July 31, 1925.*A. D. HOME, *Consul.*

[J 2691/2691/1]

No. 80.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 206.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 17, 1925.

I HAVE to inform you that I have received from the Colonial Office a copy of a despatch from the Officer Administering the Governor of the Somaliland Protectorate, reporting the interview which he had recently with Dejazmach Imaru of the Harrar Province, to investigate the murder of the Gadabursi Somali killed in August 1923 near the frontier. Mr. Kittermaster states that he is in communication with you, and I therefore assume that you are in possession of all the facts.

2. Mr. Kittermaster in his report states that the Dejazmach advanced the theory that the point named Moga Medir in the Rennell Rodd Treaty as one of the boundary points is not the hill which has always been accepted as the boundary point. Juggling with names used in treaties is obviously to be deprecated, and I shall be glad if you will do everything possible to obtain from Ras Tafari a disclaimer of the Dejazmach's hypothesis. I trust, moreover, that you will do all that you properly can to secure payment of adequate compensation, and I shall be interested to learn the results of your efforts.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 2763/897/1]

No. 81.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 211.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, September 25, 1925.

WITH reference to your despatch No. 112 of the 22nd August last, I have to inform you that I approve the representations made by you and Mr. Home in connection with the recent Abyssinian poaching raid in the River Dinder-Khor Galegu district.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 2841/897/1]

No. 82.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 128.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, September 3, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 70 of the 8th July last, regarding the Abyssinian raid near Hendesa on the 26th August, 1923, I have the honour to transmit herewith copies of the report from His Majesty's consul at Harar on the subject of the joint enquiry into the incident. I have also the honour to enclose extracts from a report from the Acting Governor of Somaliland on the subject. It is most disappointing to me that no result should have been obtained locally, for I have little hope of reaching a satisfactory settlement at Addis Ababa, so far from the spot.

2. The maps at this Legation do not help to elucidate the matter. I cannot find either Jifa Medir, or even Hendesa, in them, and it is quite true that neither of these places are mentioned in the treaty of 1897, to which no map is attached.

3. I am proposing to visit Harar shortly, when I shall be able to discuss the matter with Mr. Plowman. After that, it may be necessary for him to come to Addis Ababa to explain to Ras Tafari personally the topography of the village mentioned.

4. I am forwarding copies of this despatch to the Acting Governor of Somaliland and to His Majesty's consul at Harar.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 1 in No. 82.

Consul Plowman to Mr. Bentinck.

Sir,

Harar, August 11, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to submit my report on the conference recently held at Hendesa to investigate the matter of the violation of the frontier and the murder of a British-protected Gadabursi at that place by a party of Abyssinian tax-collecting soldiers in August 1923.

2. The dilatory and changeable ways of the Abyssinian Government caused me some difficulty in making the necessary arrangements, and on one or two occasions nearly destroyed the possibility of holding the conference at all. The original date proposed, the 31st July, was chosen by Dejazmach Imaru, and was accepted by the Somaliland Government, who nominated Captain H. E. Long, Acting District Commissioner, Boramo, as its delegate. At the same time, Mr. H. B. Kittermaster, Acting Governor of British Somaliland, extended a cordial invitation to Dejazmach Imaru to visit him at Hargeisa or Gebileh with his staff at the conclusion of the conference. This invitation was handed by me to Imaru on the 13th July, and it was not until thirteen days later that he replied to the effect that he would be unable to cross the frontier in connection with this investigation, which would have to be conducted in Abyssinian territory. I feel sure you will agree that the Abyssinian Government showed a surprising lack of courtesy in thus keeping his Excellency waiting until within a few days of the date they had themselves fixed, and in expecting him to make fresh plans at the last moment. I was then at Jiggiga, and as it was too late to receive further communications from Somaliland, I prevailed

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upon the Dejazmach to abandon his earlier intention of refusing to attend the conference in person unless the Acting Governor was there too, and I got him to agree to pay an unofficial visit to the latter, if he should find it possible to come so far as Hendesa or Boramo.

3. I reached Hendesa on the 31st July, and found Captain Long, accompanied by Mr. Farquharson, geological adviser to the Somaliland Government, already encamped within a few hundred yards of the village that had been the scene of the raid. Dejazmach Imaru arrived the next morning, and made his camp 2 miles away at the foot of Jifu Medir, while his Excellency moved from Gebileh to Debba, about 7 miles south-east of Hendesa, on the 2nd August. The Dejazmach was accompanied by Kanyazmach Gadla Giorgis, Governor of Jigjiga, and by the members of the original commission proposed, viz., Fitaurari Mazlakia, Kanyazmach Admasu and Badda, and Bajirond Tessama, and had brought some 400 soldiers with him. On the 2nd August he came over with most of his following to inspect the site of the village, and Captain Long and myself went to his camp the next day and held the preliminary investigation.

4. The Abyssinian and Gadabursi versions of the incident were in agreement that a party of Abyssinian and Somali police came to the village and demanded tribute. Payment was refused, and so they caught three camels. The Gadabursi, after driving off the rest of their stock, threatened the Abyssinians, who dropped the camels and fled, leaving one of the village, by name Omar Kalib, dead behind them. The Gadabursi said that this man was killed just outside the village, and that the Abyssinians entered both his village and a neighbouring one 600 yards away, and carried off rupees, cloth and ghee to a total value of 200 rupees. The only witnesses produced by the other side were some of their Somali police present at the time, and the actual murderer and his Abyssinian companions were not brought. The Abyssinian version was to the effect that the man killed was an Abyssinian Somali who was only at Hendesa on a visit from his village on the other side at Kor Dera, and that the Hendesa village had regularly paid taxes before to the Abyssinian Government. Both statements were denied by the Gadabursi, and were not proved. It was further alleged that the man was killed in self-defence, as the tax-collectors, after seeing that the Somalis were too strong, relinquished the stock and fled for their lives; that the Gadabursi pursued them for over a mile in the hope of looting a rifle or two, hit one Somali policeman on the neck with a spear—another witness said it was a stick—and an Abyssinian on the head with a stone, and that then they had to retaliate, with the result that one man was killed. Dejazmach Imaru said he considered that the Gadabursi had not proved their case for the loot, as he could not believe that the Abyssinians would have dared to return to the villages a second time once they had been driven off. There is force in this argument, but it is difficult to understand why the inhabitants of two small villages, who could not have mustered more than twenty or thirty fighting men, without a rifle amongst them, should have pursued a party of eight Abyssinians and six Somali police, all, save two of the latter, armed with rifles, unless it was with the object of attempting to recover their stolen property. It must also be remembered that Captain Long reached the site of the raid within thirty-six hours of its occurrence, and took down depositions, before the Somalis, who had no idea that the incident would assume its present importance, had had time to concoct a fanciful story. Their claims, too, are modest, and have all the appearance of being true. No judgment was rendered, as the Abyssinian main line of defence was that the locality in question was well within their territory.

5. Dejazmach Imaru said that, according to the Amharic version of the treaty, the frontier ran from San Hill to Egu Hill, and thence to Moga Medir; Jifu Medir Hill was not mentioned, and, moreover, it could not be identified with Moga Medir, which was not described as a hill. The latter, so far as they could discover, did not exist at all, and he supposed the name was a clerical error for Toga Medir, a water course said to lie south-east of Egu; he did not pretend that he knew the place, but said only that Somalis had told him it existed, and I imagine it must be a continuation of the Tug Wajaleh. The correct line, according to this contention, would thus throw Jifu Medir and Hendesa within Abyssinian territory. It was pointed out to him that the maps gave Moga Medir as an alternative name for Jifu Medir, and he acknowledged that all the maps he had seen gave Jifu Medir as the point, and said that he had already sent all his maps to Addis Ababa for verification without as yet receiving a reply. The Ughaz of the Gadabursi was called, and he said that Jifu Medir was associated with Sheikh Moga, who was buried there, and this is the obvious explanation of the error in the treaty.

6. In the circumstances no conclusion was possible, and it was decided to transfer the question to Addis Ababa, where a reference to the map filed with the original treaty should settle the point without difficulty. This defence is ingenious, but it has been put forward, in my opinion, not so much because the Dejazmach really believes in it, as in order to relieve himself of the invidious task of giving a decision on a frontier matter. It was clear that he had received strict orders to make no statements that might in any way commit his Government, and he even declined to give the result of his examination of the position of the village as seen from Egu Hill, and with regard to the line drawn from there to Jifu Medir. Imaru, together with his officers, made this examination on the 5th August, and Mr. Kittermaster and Captain Long also climbed this hill a few hours later. The relative positions could be easily seen from there, and the disputed site was more obviously within our territory than would have been expected from the readings on the theodolite which had been previously taken, and which had conclusively proved that the village was nearly 2 miles over the frontier. The site of the actual murder as alleged by the Abyssinians was equally clear to the naked eye as being well on our side, and so, once Jifu Medir has been identified with the Moga Medir of the treaty, I cannot believe that the Abyssinian Government will be either so foolish or so dishonest as to pretend that there is any further room for doubt.

7. On the 4th August Dejazmach Imaru and four of his officers were entertained to luncheon at Hendesa by his Excellency. Here again the Dejazmach began by adopting a childish attitude, and said he could only accept the invitation if Mr. Kittermaster would also agree to visit his camp. I pointed out that the latter could not, strictly speaking, leave the protectorate without the permission of His Majesty's Government, and that Imaru's invitation was belated and his proposed bargaining undignified. He gave way in the end, and a return visit was later arranged for the 6th August, when he entertained his Excellency and all of us to luncheon at his camp. Guards of honour were mounted on each occasion, but, as the visits were unofficial, there were no toasts or speeches.

8. In the course of our meetings certain other questions were discussed, the most important of which was a complaint by the Dejazmach of the difficulty they experienced in obtaining satisfaction in the cases of Abyssinian criminals who took refuge in British Somaliland. He submitted that it was almost impossible for the prosecutor and his witnesses to proceed to Hargeisa, owing to the distance and dangers involved, and that his Government had no representative on the British side who could help them in conducting their cases. It was finally agreed that all future questions of this nature should be referred to Dejazmach Imaru and myself in the first instance, and that, if we considered a strong *prima facie* case had been made out, the alleged criminal would be handed over to Abyssinian police, who would bring him to me for eventual trial in the Mixed Court. The majority of the few refugee Abyssinians in Somaliland are runaway slaves from Jigjiga, whose only offence is that they have deserted their masters, and as the Dejazmach had to acknowledge that he could neither demand nor expect the forced return of such persons, I do not anticipate that there will be many claims for extradition. The Dejazmach had raised the question at the request of the Governor of Jigjiga, who had hoped to arrange that a letter from himself would be held to be sufficient grounds for extraditing anyone, and who would have had no scruples in trumping up false charges, as he has himself already lost slaves in this way. Under the conditions now imposed a miscarriage of justice should be difficult. It was decided to refer the question of the appointment of an Abyssinian consular representative in British Somaliland to the Governments concerned, but, in view of the negligible numbers of Abyssinian subjects resident in the protectorate, such an appointment would have little justification, and I should be surprised if the Abyssinian Government even made a formal application.

9. Despite the controversial nature of the main subject at issue, it is gratifying to be able to report that the utmost cordiality prevailed throughout the discussions. The scrupulously correct attitude adopted by Dejazmach Imaru was, however, in striking contrast to the methods of the Governor of Jigjiga, and of Taffara Gurma, the official in charge of the Abyssinian Gadabursi, who incited some of their soldiery to penetrate into, and even beyond, the area in dispute, where they made minor requisitions of sheep, ghee, ropes, and so on. This was done purely out of a silly spirit of bravado, and with the idea of creating an impression on the natives' minds, as they told the latter that all the country south of a line between Egu and Jifu Uri was now Abyssinian territory. On the day of Dejazmach Imaru's luncheon party five Abyssinians had the impudence to come to within 400 yards of our camp, where

they started to cut jowari and grass, only to be promptly arrested. They were taken in the Abyssinian camp and handed over for punishment. Prior to taking leave, his Excellency protested at these petty annoyances, which, he felt sure, had been caused by subordinate officials acting contrary to the orders of the Dejazmach. The latter expressed his sincere regret, and said he had no idea that anything of the sort had happened. This was, I think, perfectly true. He also made Kanyzmach Gadia Giorgia apologise to his Excellency for his share in the matter. The apology was accepted, but Mr. Kittermaster warned the Abyssinians that he would continue to regard the real line as the frontier until he received other instructions, and that drastic treatment would await any further marauders, official or otherwise.

10. The various meetings, although they did not result in a final settlement, have been well worth while, as they at least showed up the flimsy nature of the Abyssinian answer to our charges. Moreover, the Dejazmach clearly appreciated Mr. Kittermaster's obvious desire to co-operate with him in all possible directions, and this factor cannot but help to facilitate our mutual dealings in the future.

Copies of this despatch are being addressed to his Excellency the Acting Governor of British Somaliland and to the Acting District Commissioner, Boramo.

I have, &c.

C. H. F. PLOWMAN.

(In camp at Hargeisa, British Somaliland.)

Enclosure 2 in No. 82.

Extract from Mr. Kittermaster's Despatch No. 183/23 of August 15, 1925, addressed to His Majesty's Minister, Addis Ababa.

2. The actual investigation of the raid at Hendesa I left to Captain Long, the district officer, and to Mr. Plowman. The enquiry was held at Dejazmach Imaru's camp. Mr. Plowman will no doubt submit a full report. It will be sufficient for me to say that the Abyssinians practically admitted the charge. They did actually admit the raiding of the village claimed by us and the killing of one Somali, though they tried to establish that he was killed by the Abyssinian soldiers in self-defence. I cannot admit this as proved, and, in any case, the killing took place in British territory and arose directly out of the aggressive action by the Abyssinian soldiers.

3. I had provided prismatic compasses and a theodolite for the Dejazmach to satisfy himself as to the position of the village, but he disregarded these, and himself climbed Egu Hill to look along the actual line between Egu and Jifa Medir, so that he might have ocular proof of the position of the village. I offered to accompany him up to the hill, but he was intensely suspicious, and refused my suggestion with the firmest decision. I myself climbed the hill later, and now am glad that the Dejazmach has done so, as I found that the village was obviously further inside our territory than I had expected from the angles read on the instruments.

4. The Dejazmach, realising, perhaps, of the weakness of the Abyssinian case, has thrown the onus of decision on Ras Tafari by putting forward the ingenious theory that Jifa Medir is not mentioned in the treaty. I cannot feel that Imaru expects himself that this defence can be treated seriously, and I hope that you will be able to demolish it at once. I am in the meantime standing on the line which has always been accepted in the past, and I have instructed Captain Long to be particularly vigilant along this debated ground for the next few months, as I anticipate that the Governor of Jigjiga, by way of bravado and of backing up his own claim, will instruct his soldiers to penetrate into this area and levy taxes. Captain Long has been instructed to deal firmly with any such incursion and not to hesitate to fire on marauders of this nature. This affair has assumed considerable importance locally. I believe the Governor of Jigjiga used his opportunities of being on the spot to tell the local inhabitants that all the ground was Abyssinian territory, and so it is particularly necessary for us to prove that their claim to it is not yet recognised.

5. The Dejazmach brought down a very large following, and our natives were subjected to several petty annoyances by wandering parties of Abyssinians. Mr. Plowman is satisfied that Imaru himself was unaware that the frontier was being violated, and I agree with him. At our last meeting I put up a complaint about it. Fortunately, four men had been captured in the act, and I could produce

showing contempt of our authority. He apologised to me on Imaru's order, and I took them as evidence. The Dejazmach, who himself had been most punctilious in observing the frontier, expressed himself as exceedingly sorry. My own idea is that the Governor of Jigjiga was primarily responsible as part of a deliberate policy of agreed not to press the matter. But though our people suffered no material damage from these petty acts, I feel that some small compensation should be paid to them in order to let them see that we are able to protect them.

6. I therefore put forward my suggestion as to the claims to be submitted to the Abyssinian Government in settlement of the whole matter. Colonel Sir Gerald Summers, in his despatch to Mr. Russell of the 10th October, 1923, asked for 200 rupees as compensation for articles looted, "dia" of £200 for the Somali killed, an apology for the violation of the frontier and an assurance that it should not happen again.

7. Mr. Plowman will have informed you that Imaru would not accept any looting as proved, and though I am satisfied myself that it took place, it cannot be legally established, and perhaps the basis of this part of the claim might be shifted so that the question of the loot need not be further discussed. The affair is two years old. This Government has suffered moral damage by our inability to get satisfaction for our people, and the people have suffered damage from the annoyances to which they have been subjected. I therefore propose, instead of 200 rupees, 500 dollars or £50 as general compensation for the delay and trouble to which this Government has been put. The second item of full "dia" of 100 camels or £200 is the most important. The Abyssinian Government will no doubt object to this, as it is in excess of their usual payment, but I think you will agree that they must pay in accordance with the custom of the tribe of the injured party. I lay less stress on the last two of the previous demands, though I feel that they might be put forward.

8. I shall be glad to hear if you think that these damages can be extracted from the Abyssinians. I most sincerely trust that you will be able to get them to pay in full, as such payment would greatly enhance our reputation for exerting our authority against the Abyssinians and would have a very good local effect.

[J 2841/897/1]

No. 83.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 223.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 5, 1925.

YOUR despatch No. 128 of the 3rd ultimo regarding the Abyssinian raid near Hendesa on the 26th August, 1923, was received after the bag which contained my despatch No. 206 of the 17th on the same subject had been closed. The fuller information supplied by you regarding the recent conference strengthens the impression which I had already formed that as little time as possible should be lost in making the representations which, in my despatch under reference, I instructed you to make to Ras Tafari regarding the interpretation of the Rennell Rodd Treaty.

2. In the meanwhile, I note that you have been unable to find the places mentioned by Mr. Plowman on the maps at your disposal. I therefore transmit to you herewith six copies of the most recent map* of the district in question, on which, incidentally, you will see that the hill in dispute is given both names—Jifa Medir and Moga Medir.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 2966/897/1]

No. 84.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 8.)

(No. 77.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, October 7, 1925.

ITALIAN Minister tells me that he is telegraphing to suggest that Italian Government send ultimatum to Abyssinian Government.

Eight months ago Abyssinians raided cattle across frontier of Eritrea. When two Italian subjects crossed into Abyssinia to identify their cattle both were

* Not reproduced.

murdered. Italian Minister demanded arrest of murderer, but in spite of repeated promises from Ras Tafari arrest has never been effected. Whilst admitting probable inability of Ras Tafari to keep promise, Italian Minister considers that Abyssinian Government requires a sharp lesson. He suggests that Italian troops cross frontier to arrest murderer if Abyssinian Government cannot do so.

[J 2966/897/1]

No. 85.

*Foreign Office to Colonial Office.**Foreign Office, October 13, 1925.*

Sir,

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the accompanying copy of a telegram* from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa reporting that his Italian colleague has advised his Government to address an ultimatum to the Abyssinian Government.

2. Mr. Chamberlain will be glad to learn whether circumstances similar to those described by Count Colli have ever arisen on the Abyssinian-Kenya frontier, and, if so, whether the Kenya Government have ever sent troops across the frontier or occupied an Abyssinian post with a view to securing redress for crimes committed by Abyssinians.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 3036/897/1]

No. 86.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain. (Received October 15.)

(No. 81.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, October 14, 1925.

MY telegram No. 77 of 7th October.

Ultimatum has been watered down to strong note to Ras Tafari and a despatch to Rome suggesting that Italian troops cross the frontier to arrest murderers.

[J 3129/897/1]

No. 87.

*Colonial Office to Foreign Office. (Received October 23.)**Downing Street, October 23, 1925.*

Sir,

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 13th October and your note of the 16th October regarding the murder of Italian subjects in Abyssinia, and to request you to inform Mr. Secretary Chamberlain that no similar case of the murder of British subjects in Abyssinia is known, and that British troops have never been sent across the frontier to secure redress for crimes committed by Abyssinians.

I am, &c.

W. C. BOTTOMLEY.

[J 3407/897/1]

No. 88.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain. (Received November 21.)

(No. 97.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Addis Ababa, November 19, 1925.

YOUR despatch No. 223.

Governor of Somaliland reports that Chief Jijiga has started building customs port at Awrrarhe close to Jifa Medir, and seems to regard action with apprehension.

* No. 84.

I am repeating to Ras Tafari in writing warning already given verbally that grave incidents are likely to occur if Abyssinians again violate this frontier, and I am instructing His Majesty's consul to warn Governor of Harar.

I sent by registered post 18th November report on present state of negotiations. For conduct of Chief Jijiga, see enclosures in my despatch No. 128.

[J 3564/897/1]

No. 89.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain. (Received December 7.)

(No. 185.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, November 14, 1925.

SINCE I wrote my despatch No. 128 of the 3rd September last regarding the Hendesa raid, I visited Harar, where I discussed the question with Dejazmatch Imaru, who had recently visited the spot in conjunction with His Majesty's consul at Harar. Dejazmatch Imaru did not dare to commit himself to any expression of opinion. He could merely refer the matter to Ras Tafari.

2. I then arranged for Mr. Plowman to visit me at Addis Ababa, and we had several conversations with Ras Tafari on the subject, but without reaching any result. Mr. Plowman and the Acting Governor of Somaliland supplied me with useful maps of the district, and I also obtained an Italian one from the Italian Minister. These, however, though showing Jifu Medir, as the place is now called, and Moga Medir, as the place is called in the treaty of the 14th May, 1897, to be the same place, were not accepted as proof by Ras Tafari, as no map was attached to the treaty of 1897, so that, according to His Imperial Highness, there is nothing to prove that they are the same place.

3. I warned His Imperial Highness that in raising the frontier question he was raising a very big one, and I suggested that we should explore the possibility of settling the smaller question without at this stage raising the frontier question. This, however, proved practically insurmountable in spite of what seemed to be a sincere effort on the part of Ras Tafari to find a solution. As I have already had occasion to point out, the question of the frontier is one which His Imperial Highness would scarcely have the necessary power to settle, but I warned him in a friendly manner that grave incidents would occur if the Abyssinians again crossed what we hold to be our frontier.

4. Ras Tafari then asked if we could prove by some document that the deceased was really a British subject. This I understood from Mr. Plowman that we could not do. The man resided on the British side of the frontier, as borne out by the inhabitants of his village, and so naturally would not have been in possession of a passport or identification certificate. Thus the frontier question again came to the fore. Ras Tafari then telephoned to Dejazmatch Imaru asking the same question, but the Dejazmatch replied that he could not prove that he was either Abyssinian or British. He had, he said, resided in Abyssinian territory until about a year before his murder, when he had moved to Hendesa. The Dejazmatch was now making enquiries into his parentage in the hopes of thereby establishing his nationality.

5. The Ras agreed with me in expressing disappointment that the question could not have been settled locally without reference to Addis Ababa, yet he has grasped at every possible straw to avoid giving satisfaction.

6. Just before M. Plowman returned to Harar a letter was found in the archives from Ras Tafari to Mr. Gerald Campbell, dated the 28th July, 1919, in which the following paragraph occurs:—

"In accordance with what Fitaurari Takla Hawariot has informed me, he says that, according to his conversation with General Archer, Governor of British Somaliland, last year he has given orders to his employees that they should not pass the mountains called Gara Sawu, Gumbur Egu and Jifa Meeder as well as the River Toga Wachalei until both Governments should agree to settle the case of the frontier. In this case (if it be so), if our chief, Mangasha Ayella, has passed the above-mentioned places and collected tax from the natives, I have given orders to Dejazmatch Imaru that he (Mangasha Ayella) should be punished properly and the money should be returned immediately, and that such actions should not be repeated."

This I showed to the Ras in the original, thinking in a gentle manner to give him a "knock-out blow." He still postponed giving satisfaction, and said he must refer to

Dejazmatch Imaru again. I waited patiently for some days, and meanwhile I received your despatches Nos. 206 and 223 of the 17th September and the 5th October respectively. These I took to the Ras on the 7th November and read out to His Imperial Highness, in French, the relevant passages. I also read out to him extracts from a letter which I have just received from Mr. Plowman, which ran as follows:—

"I saw Dejazmatch Imaru two days ago, and he expressed surprise that no settlement had been reached in the Hendesa affair. He said that, as the result of his conversation on the telephone with the Ras, there seemed to be no difficulties left. . . . He said too that, in his opinion, after enquiries he had made, Jifu Medir and Moga Medir were one and the same place, and he agreed that it was more than likely that the change in name had occurred when Sheikh Moga's fame had been forgotten. He also said that he had found out from Somalis that the word 'Medir' (more correctly 'Meider') meant 'Long Tooth.' This is an important admission, as the hill in question is crowned with a most conspicuous bare pinnacle of rock which could most aptly be described as a long tooth, and there is no other hill within miles, days in fact, of which that could be said."

7. I explained to His Imperial Highness that our case was a far better one than I had at first thought, and I urged him to come to a speedy settlement, for honestly, I said, I did not think he had a good case to defend. His Imperial Highness asked for a translation of the relevant passages in Mr. Plowman's letter, and said he would telephone to Dejazmatch Imaru on the subject. I accordingly telegraphed to Mr. Plowman and suggested that he might persuade Dejazmatch Imaru to tell the Ras what he had told him (Mr. Plowman), as recorded above. Mr. Plowman then saw the Dejazmatch and, as the enclosed extracts from a private letter will show, the Dejazmatch appears to have had the honesty and sense to give up trying to defend a bad case. My despatches Nos. 179 and 181 will show you that I endeavoured to impress upon Dr. Martin and Belata Heroui, with a view to their repeating our conversation to the Ras, the need of a speedy settlement of this question in the interests of good relations between our two countries. I added that so good did our case now appear to me to be that, had I been myself at the Foreign Office and been shown a letter like that written by the Ras to Mr. Campbell in 1919, I should have confessed myself beaten.

8. I agree with the last sentence of Mr. Plowman's letter enclosed. I think the Ras has mistaken my patience and amiability for weakness, and I think it necessary that he should be made to realise in this case, as in that of the three Somalis sentenced to death, which will form the subject of a subsequent despatch, that my patience and that of His Majesty's Government can in the end become exhausted. I request your authority to adopt a strong attitude and to insist on this question being settled promptly on the lines of Mr. Russell's original demands. I enclose copy of the relevant paragraph of Mr. Russell's letter to the Ras of the 6th November, 1923.

9. I may remind you, Sir, that the failure of the Ras to settle this question was one of the reasons which decided Mr. Russell not to go to the station to see His Imperial Highness off on the occasion of his journey to Europe in the summer of 1924, and that Mr. MacDonald spoke to the Ras about this question in London in July 1924 (see note No. 3, Enclosure No. 1, in Foreign Office despatch No. 157 of the 31st July, 1924). As Mr. Russell has not been supported, in Abyssinian eyes at any rate, it is natural that the Ras and his advisers should think that they can trifle with me as they did with my predecessor.

10. I should be grateful to receive your instructions by telegram, and should suggest, for your consideration, the desirability of sending the telegram *en clair*.

11. I am forwarding a copy of this despatch to the Government of Somaliland.
I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 1 in No. 89.

Extract from Mr. Plowman's Letter to His Majesty's Minister, November 9, 1925.

I RECEIVED your telegram last night and went to see Imaru this morning. He repeated to me that his opinion was that Moga Meider and Jifu Meider were one and the same place, and said again that he could not understand why the Ras was making difficulties about a settlement, as his (Imaru's) reports had been absolutely clear. I suggested that the Ras might be afraid of the reactionary chiefs, and Imaru replied

asking why he did not put the facts before them, and challenge them to find any other answer themselves. He said that he was prepared, if required, to give his opinion in front of anyone up there.

As the Ras has asked for a copy of my private letter, could you not in return ask him to produce the letter he received from Imaru about this when I was up at Addis Ababa? It strikes me as a fair exchange, and my interpreter tells me he saw the pencil draft of this (I gather it was left lying on a table, and that the interpreter had no business to see it), and that Imaru wrote that the two places were the same so far as he could discover from Somalis he had questioned. The attempted identification of Moga Meider with Jifu Uri by the Governor of Jijiga is rank nonsense; I told Imaru that if this was persisted in we should with equal justification demand that it be identified with Kondudo, i.e., the big mountain a few miles from Harar. He replied that the one would be as far from the truth as the other.

Imaru shrewdly observed that it seemed to him to be a great mistake on the Ras's part to be obstructive in what after all was not yet a big matter, but which might easily become such if delayed much longer. I personally am beginning to think that the Ras is hanging on merely in the hope that you will reduce your demands, and in order to see how far he can go before exhausting your patience. At first he was sincere, as he had not all the facts before him from which he could judge whether we were honest in our statements, but now that he knows everything and has Imaru's opinion too, his objections have ceased to be sincere.

Enclosure 2 in No. 89.

Extract from Mr. Russell's Letter to Ras Taffari, November 6, 1923.

IN view of these raids, I am sure your Highness will think it just to order the return of the property stolen to the value of 200 rupees, and that full compensation to be paid for the man killed in accordance with Somali custom, namely, 100 camels, worth each 20 dollars, that is 2,000 dollars. I have to request your Highness to give orders to this effect. I think too the conduct of the Governor of Jijiga should be enquired into, for he is to blame for allowing such things to happen. In addition, I trust your Highness will think it right to ask me to convey the Governor of Somaliland your personal regrets that this outrage should have taken place against the territory of a friendly nation.

[J 3564/897/1]

No. 90.

Foreign Office to Colonial Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 11, 1925.

WITH reference to the letter from this Department of the 7th October last regarding the Abyssinian raid near Hendesa in 1923, I am directed by Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain to transmit to you herewith, to be laid before the Secretary of State for the Colonies, the accompanying copy of a further despatch on this subject from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa.*

2. Subject to Mr. Amery's concurrence, Sir Austen Chamberlain proposes to address a telegram *en clair* to Mr. Bentinck, instructing him to insist on the immediate compliance of the Abyssinian Government with the demands originally formulated by Mr. Russell, and pointing out that doubt as to the nationality of the victim cannot palliate a crime committed by Abyssinian officials in territory which is undisputably British.

3. In the meanwhile Sir Austen Chamberlain will be glad to learn whether, in the event of the Abyssinian Government continuing recalcitrant, the Government of British Somaliland are in a position to exercise any effective economic or other pressure on the local Abyssinian authorities across the frontier of a nature to induce the latter to urge compliance with British requirements upon the Central Government.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

* No. 89.

[14106]

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[J 3612/897/1]

No. 91.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 11.)

(No. 108.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, December 10, 1925.

FOLLOWING from Governor of Berbera:—

"Reference your telegram of 19th November. District Commissioner of Zeyla reports parties of Abyssinians on frontier near Awburreh. Up to date violation of frontier has not been reported, and I hope none will occur. But I feel it necessary to assert our authority there, and police patrols are being sent to ensure that raiding parties do not cross. I propose to give orders that if Abyssinian parties do cross frontier they are to be driven off with rifle fire if necessary. Before actually issuing these orders, I should be glad to learn whether such action would greatly embarrass you. Prompt payment of compensation for Hendesa raid would allow me to be more long-suffering, but something must soon be done to prevent further damage to our prestige."

[J 3613/897/1]

No. 92.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 11.)

(No. 109.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, December 10, 1925.

MY immediately preceding telegram No. 99.

I am again warning Ras regarding serious situation if our frontier is violated. If you agree I propose approval of orders which Governor proposes issuing. Request urgent reply.

[J 3613/897/1]

No. 93.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 78.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, December 12, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 109 of 11th December: Defensive measures contemplated by Somaliland Government in case of Abyssinian violation of frontier.

I agree. Please inform Berbera that Colonial Office also concur in proposed measures provided British authorities confine themselves to a strictly defensive attitude, as they themselves suggest in above telegram.

No. 94.

Consul London to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 15.)

(No. 428.)

(Telegraphic.)

Geneva, December 15, 1925.

ADDIS ABABA telegram No. 108.

If this is approved it should be made clear that our forces are not to cross the frontier. Compare Council's decision in Greece and Bulgarian case.

[J 3648/897/1]

No. 95.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 82.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, December 15, 1925.

MY telegram No. 78 of 12th December: Somaliland frontier.

You should inform Berbera that British forces must be careful not to cross the frontier.

[J 3671/897/1]

No. 96.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received December 18.)

Sir,

Downing Street, December 17, 1925.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 11th December regarding the Abyssinian raid into British Somaliland near Hendesa in August 1923, and to request you to inform Secretary Sir Austen Chamberlain that he concurs in the telegraphic instructions which it is proposed to give His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa in the matter. A copy of a telegram which has been sent to the Officer Administering the Government of Somaliland regarding the question raised in the third paragraph of your letter is enclosed.

I am, &c.

C. STRACHEY.

Enclosure in No. 96.

Secretary of State for the Colonies to the Officer Administering the Government of Somaliland.

(Telegraphic.)

December 16, 1925.

YOUR despatch of 24th September, Confidential.

Foreign Office propose to instruct Bentinck as in paragraph 8 of his despatch of 14th November of which you have copy. Telegraph whether, if Abyssinian Government continues recalcitrant, Government of Somaliland are in a position to exercise any effective economic or other pressure on local Abyssinian authorities across frontier of a nature to induce latter to urge Central Government to comply with British requirements.

[J 3671/897/1]

No. 97.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 84.)

(Telegraphic.)

Foreign Office, December 19, 1925.

YOUR despatch No. 185 of the 14th November: Compensation due by Abyssinian Government on account of Hendesa raid in 1923.

You should insist upon immediate compliance of Abyssinian Government with demands formulated by Mr. Russell. Doubt as to nationality of victim cannot palliate a crime committed by Abyssinian officials in territory which is indisputably British.

[J 3671/897/1]

No. 98.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 85.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, December 19, 1925.

MY immediately preceding telegram: Compensation due by Abyssinian Government on account of Hendesa raid in 1923.

Colonial Office have asked Government of Somaliland by telegram whether they can exercise any effective economic or other pressure on local Abyssinian authorities, if Central Government remain recalcitrant.

(c.) White Paper.

[J 3191/673/1]

No. 99.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 264.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 31, 1925.

A REVISED proof of the proposed White Paper on Abyssinian raids has now been prepared. From the enclosed copy* you will see that effect has been given to the recommendations put forward in your telegrams Nos. 57, 60 and 64, and that certain other amendments have been introduced with a view to imparting greater homogeneity and sequence to the paper as a whole.

2. I do not propose to arrange for the laying of the paper before Parliament until you have had time to give it further consideration. I shall therefore be glad if you will take the earliest opportunity of examining the revised proof and will furnish me with your observations by telegraph.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

No. 100.

Mr. Bentinck to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 3.)

(No. 103.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, December 2, 1925.

YOUR despatch No. 264.

I see no objection to publication.

[J 3527/673/1]

No. 101.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 79.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, December 14, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 103 of 2nd December: White Paper on raids.

Publication takes place to-day.

(d.) Miscellaneous.

[J 2839/2839/1]

No. 102.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 126.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, September 1, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to report on the case of an Abyssinian named Kanyazmatch Laku, accused of murder and robbery in British territory. The details of the case will be found in a letter from Mr. Russell to Ras Taffari, dated the 13th December, 1923, a copy of which I enclose, together with translation of the answer sent by Ras Taffari on the 8th April, 1924, after Mr. Russell had sent him two reminders.

2. Kanyazmatch Laku and his party deposited their money with Mr. Masterman, the district officer at Kakumar, who arranged to have the money transferred to Addis Ababa in dollars. A draft for the amount, £22 14s. 2d., was forwarded to His Majesty's Legation by His Majesty's consul at Maji a year ago, but taken by brigands in a mail robbery. Mr. Hodson has now forwarded to me a duplicate cheque, but recommends that the money should be forfeited and returned to the Uganda Government as part compensation for the man's misdeeds.

* Not printed.

3. As the money was deposited in British territory, I would suggest that I write and inform Ras Taffari that the Government of Uganda (or Kenya) are holding it up until Kanyazmatch Laku surrenders himself there to meet the charges of murder and robbery. The sum is comparatively small, but I am doubtful whether we are legally on strong ground in declining to hand it over. On the other hand, in view of the enclosed letter from Ras Taffari to Mr. Russell, I see no likelihood of compensation ever being extracted, nor is there the slightest chance of Kanyazmatch Laku ever proceeding to Uganda (or Kenya) to meet the charge against him.

4. I should be grateful to receive your instructions as to the course which I should adopt.

5. I am forwarding copies of this despatch to Nairobi, Entebbe and Maji.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

Enclosure 1 in No. 102.

Mr. Russell to Ras Taffari.

(After Greetings.)

Your Highness,

Addis Ababa, December 13, 1923.

I HAVE to call your Highness's attention to the following report which I have received from Mr. Consul Hodson:—

Recently Mr. Hodson went to Kakumar, a post in British territory, on the Tarash River. At the request of Dejaz Mukria, Mr. Hodson took with him Kanyazmatch Laku, who is in charge of the Galleba country. The dejazmatch wished Laku to see if there was an opening for trade in this country, also he wished him to make friends with the British officers. Laku took with him twelve men and some trade goods. The British officer at Kakumar received Kanyazmatch Laku very well. He gave him a house and food and medicine for his men, because they were ill, and he helped him to sell his goods.

The kanyazmatch and his men remained a few days at Kakumar, and then they started to return to Maji. When he had proceeded a short distance he came to the villages of some British Turkana in the neighbourhood of Nakalale. Your Highness will hardly believe that such infamous conduct is possible, but Kanyazmatch Laku attacked these villages by night and raided them. He murdered three men and wounded many. He carried off 300 cows and 70 donkeys, besides sheep and goats. This shameful act was committed in British territory, where he had been received with friendship and as a guest.

I have to request your Highness that orders may be immediately sent to Maji that Kanyazmatch Laku and his men should be sent to Addis Ababa to answer for their conduct and to receive the punishment they deserve.

CLAUD RUSSELL.

Enclosure 2 in No. 102.

Extract from Letter from Ras Taffari to Mr. Russell, dated April 8, 1924.

(Translation.)

2nd. In your letter of the 13th December, 1923, respecting Kanyazmatch Laku, I sent orders for him to come up; owing to the long distances of the country he has only lately arrived in Addis Ababa. On the 29th Magabit (7th April) he was examined before me on the charges mentioned in your letter. His reply was that he has never committed any murder, robbery, or any other crime in British territory. The charges of murdering and raiding being a serious offence, I have to inform you that it is necessary that the plaintiffs should come up here to prove their charges; meanwhile, Kanyazmatch Laku will be detained here until his case is settled.

[J 2839/2839/1]

No. 103.

Foreign Office to Colonial Office.

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 5, 1925.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Chamberlain to request you to lay before the Secretary of State for the Colonies the accompanying copy* of a despatch from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa regarding a sum of money deposited with the district officer at Kakumar by Kanyazmatch Laku at the end of 1923.

2. Mr. Chamberlain sees no objection to the retention of the money until the facts have been satisfactorily investigated, but he is advised that Ras Tafari is within his rights in desiring to try the case in person and in asking that evidence should be produced of the charges made.

3. Subject to any observations which Mr. Amery may desire to make, Mr. Chamberlain proposes to approve the suggestion put forward in the third paragraph of Mr. Bentinck's despatch that he should inform Ras Tafari that the Government of Uganda or Kenya are withholding the money until Kanyazmatch Laku meets the charges of murder and robbery preferred against him and until compensation is paid to the people of Nakalale.

I am, &c.

JOHN MURRAY.

[J 3196/2839/1]

No. 104.

Colonial Office to Foreign Office.—(Received October 31.)

Sir,

Downing Street, October 30, 1925.

I AM directed by Mr. Secretary Amery to acknowledge the receipt of your letter of the 5th October forwarding a copy of a despatch from His Majesty's Minister at Addis Ababa with regard to a sum of money deposited with Lieutenant J. Masterman, 3rd Battalion King's African Rifles, when acting as district officer at Kakuma, in the Turkhana district, by Kanyazmatch Laku, an Abyssinian official, at the end of 1923, and to request you to inform Mr. Secretary Chamberlain that Mr. Amery agrees with the view that, in the circumstances disclosed, the money should be retained until Kanyazmatch Laku meets the charges against him. Mr. Amery deplores the fact that so flagrant a case of murder and robbery in British territory by an Abyssinian official cannot, in view of the attitude of the Abyssinian Government, be brought to account. It appears from your letter of the 21st October that Mr. Chamberlain deprecates any general representations being made at this moment in regard to Abyssinian misrule, but Mr. Amery would suggest that in informing Ras Tafari that the money will be withheld, Mr. Bentinck should also inform him that it is difficult for His Majesty's Government to believe in the sincerity of the Abyssinian Administration so long as this malefactor is encouraged not to stand investigation in British territory.

2. I am to observe that the question is one which concerns the Government of Kenya rather than the Government of Uganda, as Kakuma is in the Turkhana country which is administered by Kenya.

I am, &c.

C. STRACHEY.

[J 3196/2839/1]

No. 105.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 266.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 4, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 225 of the 6th ultimo regarding the raid in the Turkhana country carried out by Kanyazmatch Laku in November 1923, I transmit to you herewith a copy of a letter on this subject from the Colonial Office.†

2. I shall be glad if you will inform the Abyssinian Government that the Government of Kenya will withhold the amount deposited by the Kanyazmatch at Kakuma until he meets the charges of murder and robbery preferred against him and

* No. 102.

† No. 104.

until compensation is paid to the people of Nakalale. You should take the opportunity afforded by this correspondence to make it clear that His Majesty's Government find it difficult to believe in the sincerity or good faith of the Abyssinian Government so long as the Kanyazmatch is encouraged not to stand investigation in British territory. With the evidence before them His Majesty's Government have no hesitation in endorsing the strong terms used by Mr. Russell in his note of the 13th December, 1923, and earnestly trust that the Abyssinian Government will give immediate proof of their *bona fides* by instituting proceedings against the Kanyazmatch and meting out to him severe punishment if his guilt is established. His Majesty's Government cannot be expected to remain indifferent if the Abyssinian Government take no action in the face of convincing evidence of the misdeeds of their officials, and of the lawlessness prevailing in their borders. The Abyssinian Government's procrastination in the matter of the charges against the Kanyazmatch and in the case of the persons responsible for the murder of the Maji mail runners, if persisted in, is bound to have a deplorable effect upon the relations between them and His Majesty's Government.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN

[J 3241/673/1]

No. 106.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to the Marquess of Crewe (Paris).

(No. 3654.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, November 4, 1925.

M. DE FLEURIAU left with me to-day the attached note of the instructions sent to the French Minister at Addis Ababa in consequence of the representations which your Lordship had made at the Quai d'Orsay in regard to the language held by M. Lagarde. I thanked M. de Fleuriau for the communication and expressed my appreciation of the action which had been taken.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

Enclosure in No. 106.

Instructions to French Minister at Addis Ababa.

LE Ministre de France à Addis-Ababa vient d'être chargé de dissiper l'impression qu'avait pu laisser au Ras Tafari un débat de la Commission de l'Esclavage de la Société des Nations au cours duquel M. Lagarde ne paraît pas s'être suffisamment inspiré des sentiments de cordiale confiance qui unissent les Gouvernements français et britannique, non seulement en ce qui touche la politique générale des deux pays, mais dans l'examen des questions intéressant l'Abyssinie. L'appui que le Gouvernement français a constamment donné au Gouvernement abyssin à la Société des Nations perdrait de son efficacité si le Gouvernement britannique avait le sentiment que ses intentions sont méconnues ou dénaturées par un agent français. M. Lagarde n'est pas un agent français et ses communications n'engagent que lui-même; seul le Ministre de France a qualité pour exprimer au Gouvernement abyssin la pensée du Gouvernement français.

*Ambassade de France, Londres,
le 4 novembre 1925.*

CHAPTER VI.—TSANA AND OTHER CONCESSIONS.

[J 2757/1015/1]

No. 107.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 21.)

(No. 104.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, August 17, 1925.

WITH reference to my despatches Nos. 41 and 60 of the 12th June and the 3rd July last, I have the honour to report that Mr. Collier, the Governor of the Bank of Abyssinia, informed me a few days ago that an Italian had found platinum in the Walega district to the west of Addis Ababa, north of Gorei. Some of it is already reported to have been sold in London. Mr. Collier seemed to think that this find might conceivably result in a rush of concession hunters to the district.

2. My Italian colleague told me that the name of his compatriot was Prasso, a well-known character in Abyssinia. He claimed to have found not only platinum but also radium, but his claims must, my colleague thought, be treated with a certain amount of reserve. I gathered from Count Colli that M. Prasso had been exploiting in conjunction with the French group mentioned in my despatch No. 60, whose representatives, MM. Ungemach and Leygues, had recently visited the Walega district in search of minerals on the way to the Baro River district. Count Colli said that negotiations were being carried on between certain French and Italian financial groups with a view to obtaining a concession to exploit minerals in the district in question. The participation of British capital had, I understood, also been invited, but this had been refused. Colonel Backhouse, of the Abyssinian Development Syndicate, has, I gather, travelled through this district in search of minerals, but he was not, I am told, successful in discovering precious metals in a workable condition.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 2765/218/1]

No. 108.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received September 21.)

(No. 114. Confidential.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, August 22, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt on the 18th instant of your despatch No. 127 of the 8th July enclosing copies of correspondence with Sir J. Currie regarding Lake Tsana and other matters connected with Abyssinia, and inviting a report from me on the subject.

2. I do not feel called upon to say much about Sir F. Lugard's memorandum of the 3rd September, 1920, on the subject of slave trade in this country (1) because it is not out of date, and (2) because, as Mr. Mallet's memorandum of the 20th August, 1924, shows, the schemes therein propounded met with objections from the Foreign and Colonial Offices, the Governor of Somaliland, and from His Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Addis Ababa. Suffice it to say that I do not think Sir F. Lugard realised sufficiently in 1920 what was clearer to him in 1925, namely:—

- (a.) The opposition which we have hitherto encountered, and are likely to encounter, in the future from the French in any attempt at coercive measures undertaken, either by the League of Nations or by certain Powers, to introduce reforms into this country.
- (b.) The swollen-headedness of a people which, having defeated one of the Great Powers (Italy), imagined that by participation in the Great War it could have turned the scale in favour of either of the opposing combinations.
- (c.) The reluctance ever to take advice. The Belgian Minister told me the other day that he had been sent here at the request of Ras Tafari to advise him on matters of foreign relations. His advice had, however, only once been sought, and then the decision was taken in exactly the opposite sense to the advice.

- (d.) The great weakness of Ras Tafari, the heir to the throne by election, but not by right of birth. His weakness has increased since his visit to Europe last year. The Advisory Council of nineteen members, reported upon in my despatch No. 69 of the 8th July, can block every reform which Ras Tafari may desire to introduce. His consequent inability to introduce any reform—so distasteful to his compatriots; the constant accusations made against him of selling the country to the foreigner; the ever-present possibility that Lij Yasu, Dejazmatch Taye or Ras Kassa, having a better blood-claim to the throne, may one day prove more acceptable to the people, and be put in the place of Ras Tafari; lastly, the probability, rather than possibility, that the Empress, who is about 46 years of age, will outlive Ras Tafari, a frail gentleman of 33, whose father and uncle died prematurely from tuberculosis, and who would hardly appear likely to be able to withstand the great strain of constant overwork.

3. As regards the conclusion in paragraph 6 of Sir F. Lugard's notes of this year:—

- (a.) I have pointed out above the inability of Ras Tafari to carry out reforms, and I fear that a grant of money to enable him to carry them out would afford to his enemies the desired proof of his "betrayal of his country." Money might be better and more effectively spent upon educational and philanthropic institutions, as suggested in my despatch No. 113 of to-day's date. A very powerful lever for obtaining Lake Tsana might be the offer of an outlet to the sea. I shall revert to this point later. But it would, I think, be well to keep the two questions of Lake Tsana and slavery distinct from one another, and in discussing the latter question to bear in mind that it is, I think, only Great Britain which is really interested. The United States of America are not members of the League, nor have they any diplomatic or consular representative in this country, so that it seems unlikely that they will pay much attention to the slavery question. And, after all, the improvement of public security with regard to life and property generally is certainly not less important.
- (b.) The threat of exclusion from the League. The Abyssinian Government has it in its power to suppress slave-raiding at any rate by appointing good Governors, especially in the border provinces, but to suppress slave-dealing will be considerably more difficult, and require a great deal more pressure. It is well known and appreciated in this country that Abyssinia joined the League in 1923, and obtained her wishes in regard to exclusion from the prohibited arms zone at the recent conference at Geneva, in the face of the opposition of Great Britain and Italy. It may well be asked whether a threat as suggested could ever be made by a united League, and whether Abyssinia might not come out as triumphant as Turkey did in 1922 and 1923 from an encounter with a divided Europe.
- (c.) The question of unofficial agents is a very delicate one, and I have already made a suggestion on this subject in my despatch No. 113 of to-day. Men able to drop hints of the nature suggested in paragraph 7 of Sir F. Lugard's notes would have to be most carefully selected, for such hints might very easily do more harm than good. I should have to know the gentlemen referred to before expressing an opinion, and, even so, the initiative of inviting an expression of opinion from them would have to lie with the Empress and the Ras. Any opinion expressed, or hint given, would most certainly be repeated to the present French adviser, M. de Bellefonds, and probably also to M. Lagarde, who now play, and will probably continue to play, the part here so successfully played by M. Franklin-Bouillon in Turkey in 1922 and 1923.

4. As I have already pointed out in paragraph 2 (d) above, it seems idle to speculate on the death of the Empress Zauditu before that of Ras Tafari.

5. I regret that so much of the above should be mere negative criticism. But I have two tentative suggestions to make of a positive nature:—

- (a.) Education along Christian lines, as suggested in my despatch No. 113, in order to bring progress and enlightenment into this country; and
- (b.) The offer of a seaport in exchange for Lake Tsana.

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At present we are negotiating with the Italian Government, who are to be allowed to give port facilities to the Abyssinians. We have still to find a means of satisfying the French, whose opposition in this country could be formidable, and who might either protest at the idea of port facilities in Eritrea, and forestall such an offer by a more convenient one at Jibuti or neighbourhood. They could hardly protest at an Italian railway so long as it remained within the terms of the Tripartite Agreement of 1906.

6. I submit that the question be considered of reaching a colonial agreement with the French, whereby French Somaliland be ceded to us in exchange for some place in West Africa, and/or for some financial arrangement in connection with the French debt. The French railway would, of course, then come into our hands, and France would in fact have to consent to take third place in this country, as we did in Morocco after 1904. By this means we should perhaps occupy a much stronger position in Abyssinia than that of the French to-day. Abyssinia would find that, instead of playing off three Powers against one another, she would be face to face with a fairly solid Anglo-Italian front, and that, having no other neighbours, the pressure might prove sufficient to induce her to be accommodating as regards Lake Tsana, and to listen to advice as regards putting her house in order. The Tsana Dam will, in any case, not be easy to obtain. We shall have to be able to bring very considerable pressure to bear if we are to obtain it.

7. The Jibuti arrangement would also have the advantage over the Zeyla scheme of avoiding the undesirable necessity of handing over British-protected Somalis to the Abyssinians whom they hate. We should be surrendering British subjects in West Africa to a European nation, rather than those of East Africa to an uncivilised one. With Jibuti we should have a powerful lever in our hands, and could perhaps, if we should so desire, accord port facilities to Abyssinia, such as Greece recently accorded to Serbia at Salonica and along the Salonica-Guevgueli Railway. Financial difficulties, apart from the general dislike of the Abyssinians to living in the hot lowlands, might make it impossible for the Abyssinian Government to administer a seaport, even though Ras Tafari, rather than the reactionary party, ardently desires this. A corridor arrangement could get over the financial difficulties and probably be more satisfactory from our point of view.

I have, &c.
C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 2765/218/1]

No. 109.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 237.)
Sir,

Foreign Office, October 15, 1925.

I HAVE carefully considered the suggestions put forward in your confidential despatch No. 114 of the 22nd August, in which you furnished me with your observations on the correspondence with Sir J. Currie and Sir F. Lugard respecting Lake Tsana and other matters connected with Abyssinia.

2. When Sir F. Lugard wrote his memorandum in June last it was in the expectation that the presentation of the report of the Slavery Commission set up by the League of Nations might give rise to considerable public discussion of the position in Abyssinia and possibly to the despatch of a commission to visit the country and make recommendations for the introduction of reforms. From recent despatches on the subject you will have learnt that the situation did not develop as anticipated by Sir F. Lugard; the Slavery Commission did not give that prominence to Abyssinian affairs which the British representative expected, and the Assembly, far from ordering an enquiry on the spot, eventually decided to postpone until next year the detailed consideration of the commission's recommendations and of the projected slavery protocol. Slavery in Abyssinia is thus unlikely for some time to attract special attention, and there is no immediate prospect of important decisions being taken so far as that country is concerned. It would therefore be useless at present to attempt to lay down details of the policy to pursue in regard to such remote and hypothetical eventualities as the League enquiry, the provision of funds to enable Ras Tafari to carry out reforms or the possibility of a threat to exclude Abyssinia from the League.

3. It has unfortunately proved impossible as yet to effect much progress in regard to those other Abyssinian questions which are of particular interest to His Majesty's

Government. The negotiations with the Italian Government regarding Lake Tsana have been delayed by the illness of M. Contarini and by the absence of His Majesty's Ambassador, who has only recently returned to his post, and a settlement is unlikely before the end of the year. Similarly, the arms traffic problem is still far from solution; you are aware that His Majesty's Government, in concert with the Italian Government, are endeavouring to reach an agreement with the French Government with a view to checking the import of arms into Abyssinia. Until agreement is reached on this point it will be inadvisable to attempt to enlist French support for our projects in regard to Lake Tsana, where their interests are less directly involved than in the case of the traffic in arms.

4. The moment therefore has not arrived when effect could be given, if such a course were deemed desirable, to Sir F. Lugard's suggestion that both Ras Tafari and the Empress should be informed of the situation as regards the independence of the country and the necessity of reform in the matter of slavery.

5. But I agree with you that, when the time comes to open negotiations on the subject of Lake Tsana with the Abyssinian Government, more harm than good might result from the use of unofficial agents, in however friendly a light they might be regarded by the Abyssinians. All treaties and agreements concluded with the Abyssinians in the past have been negotiated by the official representatives of His Majesty's Government, and I see no reason to believe that a change in method will produce more favourable results.

6. In the concluding paragraphs of your despatch you suggest that the French Government should be invited to cede Jibuti in exchange for some British territory, such as the Gambia colony, and/or for a remission of a part of the French debt to His Majesty's Government. Although I am fully alive to the desirability, in principle, of eliminating French interests in Jibuti, I see no prospect at present of being able to negotiate a territorial exchange on the lines which you suggest. Even when negotiating the agreement of 1904 the French showed themselves hard bargainers, and then His Majesty's Government had the advantage of being in a position to veto French designs in Morocco, the successful issue of which they passionately desired. Now it is His Majesty's Government who are in the position of suppliants. The mere request for Jibuti would invest that territory, in French eyes, with such extraordinary value that no British Government could pay the price demanded. Again, for His Majesty's Government to seek additions to their territory at this moment, even though immediate retransfer were in contemplation, would excite jealousy, suspicion and counter claims on the part of other Governments, while French sensibilities would be wounded to the quick by the suggestion that they should compound with us in the matter of their war debt by selling a colony to which they profess to be bound by ties of expediency and sentiment.

I am, &c.
AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3102/218/1]

No. 110.

Sir R. Graham to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 21.)

(No. 234. Confidential.)
(Telegraphic.)

Rome, October 20, 1925.

SECRETARY-GENERAL having at last recovered and returned to his duties, I have reopened Tsana negotiations with him. Unfortunate complication has arisen owing to attitude of Governor-General of Eritrea, who is now in Rome. Gasparini, while extremely friendly and apparently anxious for negotiation to succeed, is very pessimistic, and apprehensive as to its repercussion on Italian interests in Eritrea. He declares Tsana question has become point of national honour with local chiefs, that Italy has so far reaped advantages from neutral attitude but will incur much resentment by joining us in issue. He fears that her present friendly relations with chiefs will be endangered, and will amongst other drawbacks neutralise any hope of economic advantages to Italy from agreement. He has made several suggestions which are unacceptable. I have pointed out that we are just as anxious as Italians to preserve friendly character of any negotiations on the subject with Abyssinians, and latter should not resent project which brings them important material advantages. I have to some extent allayed his apprehensions, but in the

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meantime he has thoroughly frightened Ministry of Colonies, and even Contarini is shaken. I am pursuing discussion with latter and Minister for the Colonies to-morrow, but in case things go badly I should be glad to know whether McGregor's assistance would be available to me should I require it. I understand he is in Europe, and he could help me to counter certain of Gasparini's local and technical arguments. I hope, however, to be able to get on without him, and shall only ask for his presence if necessary.

[J 3102/218/1]

No. 111.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 293.)

(Telegraphic.) R.

Foreign Office, October 23, 1925.

YOUR telegram No. 234 of the 20th October: Reopening of Tsana negotiations. McGregor will be available if wanted up to the middle of November.

[J 3083/218/1]

No. 112.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr Henderson (Cairo).

(No. 1134.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 21, 1925.

I TRANSMIT to you, herewith, a copy of the provisional draft of the note which it is proposed to send to the Italian Government on the subject of the Tsana Concession, subject to any further amendments which His Majesty's Ambassador at Rome may find it necessary to make.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 1791/218/1]

Enclosure in No. 112.

Provisional Draft Note to Italian Government.

M. le Président du Conseil,

YOUR Excellency is well aware of the vital importance to Egypt and the Sudan of maintaining and, if possible, increasing the volume of water for irrigation purposes available in those countries from the Blue and White Niles and their tributary streams. Various schemes for the purpose have been carried out or are projected, and you are informed of the negotiation undertaken at Addis Ababa by His Majesty's Government, acting in a fiduciary capacity for the Sudan Government and mindful of Egyptian interests in the matter, in order to obtain a concession from the Government of Abyssinia for the construction of a barrage at Lake Tsana with a view to storing its waters for use in the Blue Nile. So far these negotiations have led to no practical result.

In November 1919 the delegates of the Italian Government then in London were good enough to offer Italian co-operation in this question in the following terms:--

"In view of the predominating interests of Great Britain in respect of the control of the waters of Lake Tsana, Italy offers Great Britain her support, in order that she may obtain from Ethiopia the concession to carry out works of barrage in the lake itself, within the Italian sphere of influence, pending the delimitation of the extent of the territorial zone to be recognised as pertaining to Great Britain in respect of the latter's predominant hydraulic interests, and pending a just consideration of the reservation on behalf of Italy by the Tripartite Agreement likewise in respect of her hydraulic interests. Italy further offers her support to Great Britain in order that the latter may obtain from Ethiopia within the sphere of Italian influence a sufficient corridor in order to establish a territorial juncture between Lake Tsana and the Sudan.

"Italy requests the support of Great Britain in order that she may obtain from the Ethiopian Government the concession to construct and to run a railway from the frontier of Eritrea to the frontier of Italian Somaliland; which railway, according to the Tripartite Agreement, must pass to the west of

Addis Ababa. It is understood that this railway, together with all the necessary works for its construction and for its running, must have an entirely free passage through the above-mentioned corridor.

Italy demands from Great Britain, as she also reserves to herself the right to demand from France, an exclusive economic influence in the west of Ethiopia and in the whole of the territory to be crossed by the above-mentioned railway, and the promise to support with the Ethiopian Government all the demands for economic concessions regarding the Italian zone."

The above offer was not entertained at the time, chiefly owing to the strong objection felt to the idea of allowing a foreign Power to establish any sort of control over the head waters of rivers, so vital to the prosperity and even the existence of Egypt and the Sudan. But in view of the relations of mutual confidence so happily existing between our two Governments, His Majesty's Government desire to extend to this question the principle of friendly co-operation which has proved so valuable in other fields. His Britannic Majesty's Government have accordingly further examined the question and recognise that the Italian proposal is not in contradiction with the stipulations of the London Agreement of the 13th December, 1906, since the object of that agreement is to maintain the *status quo* in Ethiopia, on the basis of the international instruments indicated in article 1 thereof and the co-ordination of the action of the signatory States to protect their respective interests, so that they should not suffer prejudice. They would therefore welcome the Italian support offered provided that it can be accepted without prejudice to those paramount hydraulic interests of Egypt and the Sudan which the Italian Government have not failed to recognise.

I have therefore the honour, under instructions from His Majesty's Principal Secretary of State for Foreign Affairs, to request your Excellency's support and assistance at Addis Ababa with the Abyssinian Government in order to obtain from them a concession for His Majesty's Government to construct a barrage at Lake Tsana, together with the right to maintain a corridor road for the passage of stores, personnel, &c., as also the right to maintain an adequate establishment at the lake itself for the upkeep and protection of the dam.

His Majesty's Government, in return, are prepared to support the Italian Government in obtaining from the Abyssinian Government a concession to construct and run a railway from the frontier of Eritrea to the frontier of Italian Somaliland. It would be understood that this railway, together with all the necessary works for its construction and for its running, would have entirely free passage through the corridor road mentioned above.

With this object in view the necessary identic instructions should be sent to the British and Italian representatives in Ethiopia to concert for common action with the Abyssinian Government in order to obtain that the concessions desired by the Governments of Great Britain and Italy regarding Tsana and the construction of a railway to join up Eritrea with Italian Somaliland should be granted contemporaneously. It remains understood that in the event of one of the two Governments securing the concession sought for while the other Government failed to do so, the Government which had obtained satisfaction would not relax its whole-hearted efforts to secure a corresponding satisfaction for the other Government concerned.

In the event of His Majesty's Government, with the valued assistance of the Italian Government, obtaining from the Abyssinian Government the desired concession on Lake Tsana, they are also prepared to recognise an exclusive Italian economic influence in the west of Abyssinia and in the whole of the territory to be crossed by the above-mentioned railway. They would further promise to support with the Abyssinian Government all Italian demands for economic concessions in the above zone. But such recognition and undertaking are subject to the proviso that the Italian Government, on their side, recognising the prior hydraulic rights of Egypt and the Sudan, will engage not to construct on the head waters of the Blue or White Niles or their tributaries or affluents any work which might sensibly modify their flow into the main river. It is understood that the above proviso would not preclude a reasonable use of the waters in question by the inhabitants of the region, even to the extent of constructing dams for hydro-electric power or small reservoirs in minor affluents to store water for domestic purposes, including cultivation of food crops necessary to their own subsistence.

Sir R. Graham to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received October 26.)

(No. 908. Confidential.)

Sir,

Rome, October 23, 1925.

I HAD the honour to report in my telegram No. 234, Confidential, of the 20th instant, a complication which had arisen in the Lake Tsana negotiation owing to the attitude of the Governor-General of Eritrea, who has just returned to Italy for two months' holiday. The illness of the Secretary-General to the Ministry for Foreign Affairs at a critical moment in the negotiation, when the only outstanding point appeared to be the phraseology of one sentence in the proposed British note, was a real misfortune. Senator Contarini was absent from Rome from the beginning of August until about ten days ago, and it was evident that none of his subordinates had sufficient authority to conclude the negotiation. When I resumed it with the Senator last week I saw at once that something had happened to modify his attitude; he told me of the Governor-General of Eritrea's views, and begged me to see Dr. Gasparini and hear them. I had two long discussions with Dr. Gasparini at the end of the week. He expressed very friendly feelings towards Great Britain, which he claimed to have shown in his relations with the Anglo-Sudanese authorities, and his desire for the present negotiation to succeed. But on this head he was decidedly pessimistic. He said that the Italian authorities in Eritrea had, after a long period of troubled relations with the chiefs of the adjoining districts of Abyssinia, at last succeeded in establishing friendly intercourse with them. He had managed to persuade them that Italy was their friend, and this had led not only to greater security but also to considerable commercial developments. Indeed, the economic success or failure of Eritrea greatly depended upon the attitude of these chiefs. He declared that they one and all had strong feelings on the subject of Lake Tsana, and regarded the question as one of national honour. The Italian attitude of not supporting and even, he must confess, showing some opposition to our Lake Tsana project had done much to win their confidence and sympathy. When they realised that Italy had changed her policy and was supporting the scheme they would certainly feel bitter resentment and show it. This would react most unfavourably upon Italian interests in Eritrea, and would render nugatory any economic advantages which the Anglo-Italian agreement might hold out in prospect for Italy. He considered that it was absolutely essential, if Abyssinia's assent to the project was to be obtained, that these powerful chiefs should be conciliated. He urged that in the proposal which British and Italian representatives at Addis Ababa would make, some hope should be held out to these chiefs of obtaining a definite share in the increased water supply which the Tsana Dam would provide.

2. I told Dr. Gasparini that, in my opinion, his apprehensions were greatly exaggerated. He seemed to consider that our intention was, with Italian help, to force the scheme down the throats of the Abyssinians. On the contrary, it was just as much in our as in Italian interests to conciliate both the Government and people of that country. The negotiation would be conducted throughout in the most amicable spirit, even to the extent, if necessary, of invoking the aid of the League of Nations. The realisation of the project would bring substantial material advantages both to the Abyssinian Government and nation. This they could not fail to realise, and my information was that they would be more easily persuaded than Dr. Gasparini believed. There were certain arguments which few Orientals could resist. It seemed to me that he was regarding the matter far too much from a purely local point of view. He was ignoring the fact that Italy, in return for her diplomatic support, would be receiving very great advantages. Even from the local Eritrean point of view the realisation by the Abyssinians that Italy and Great Britain were acting together must be important. To this he assented. Moreover, Italy, instead of shadowy and doubtful claims under the Tripartite Agreement, would obtain all she had asked for in 1921—railway rights, an economic monopoly, with a possible eventual territorial reversion in Western Abyssinia. In return for all this we must insist that the water supply so vital to Egypt and the Sudan should not only suffer no diminution but must be increased. We should, of course, pay for what we took, and the proposals to be made to the Abyssinians would be as attractive as possible. But I could hold out no hopes that we would promise a definite amount of water from the Tsana reservoir to the chiefs in whom he was interested or to anybody else. I believed that the inhabitants of Western Abyssinia depended mainly upon an

abundant rainfall for their crops, but, in any case, their right to cultivate food crops had been recognised in our proposed note. They would in no case be worse off if the dam were constructed than they were now. But we could certainly bear in mind his recommendation as to the desirability of conciliating and even obtaining the support of the local chiefs for the scheme.

3. Dr. Gasparini replied that he was a good deal reassured by what I said. He admitted that he was regarding the matter from a purely local point of view, but then it was his business to do so, and he quite realised that Signor Mussolini and Senator Contarini might override his objections in view of considerations of superior importance. He would be grateful for anything that could be done to conciliate the chiefs, and, in reply to an enquiry on my part, he mentioned Gabressellasi as particularly influential and important.

4. On the 31st instant the Minister of the Colonies asked me to come and see him in order to discuss the question. Dr. Gasparini had evidently succeeded in frightening the Prince di Scalea, and he used the same arguments to me. One point he made was that Eritrean commerce with the neighbouring Abyssinian provinces had increased—I speak from memory—from 90 million lire last year to 400 million lire during the past nine months. He said that he realised that it would be difficult to insert in our exchange of notes any reference to some part of any increased water supply being reserved for the local chiefs, but he wondered whether it would not be possible in a subsequent exchange of confidential notes or letters to establish some arrangement of the kind. He added that the proposed agreement between Great Britain and Italy would, when it became known, be much criticised here.

5. But I answered that I was quite unable to recommend to you any confidential agreement of the nature indicated, and continued in much the same sense as I had spoken to Dr. Gasparini, but laid more stress on the political advantages to Italy of the agreement. I said that if I thought that, when the negotiation started with the Abyssinians, the Italians were going to do anything but discourage demands on their part for a share in the water, I would sooner not continue the present conversation. The Prince replied that in no case would this happen. Italian support for our point of view would be wholehearted and unreserved. As regards criticism, I pointed out that the proposal had originally been made by the Italians in a memorandum from the Schanzer delegation in London. This fact must disarm Opposition criticism. He agreed, but declared he was more afraid of the ultra-Nationalists in his own party. I said that he had only to show them the conditions of the present proposal, and then the language used by Sir Edward Grey to the Italian Ambassador on the 25th November, 1906, which I read to him, and ask them whether they would prefer that we should maintain the attitude then disclosed. At the end of our conversation the Prince di Scalea declared that his only object was to ensure the success of the forthcoming negotiation with the Abyssinian Government. He was himself so much persuaded of the political importance of Great Britain and Italy walking hand-in-hand in such a matter that he was ready to accept any terms we offered. He added that this was Signor Mussolini's frame of mind. He told me that he and Dr. Gasparini had recently had an interview with Signor Mussolini in the matter and had explained their point of view. His Excellency had told them to do their best, but had added that in no case were they to "nemiciarsi gli Inglesi"—antagonise the English. Our conversation ended on a most friendly note.

7. The Prince di Scalea left yesterday to attend a celebration at Spielberg in honour of Italian Irredentists who died in Austrian prisons, and will not be back for a few days. As soon as he returns I am to see him and Senator Contarini together, when I hope to induce them to accept our note as it stands with one small alteration, which I mention later, and to help them in framing the Italian reply. It has occurred to me that if as a final paragraph to that reply they desire to include a sentence showing their interest in the local chiefs, there might be no objection to this. I would suggest to them that they should confine it to the expression of a pious hope that in the forthcoming negotiation with the Abyssinian Government the interests of these chiefs should be borne in mind.

8. I have asked you whether Mr. McGregor's assistance would be available to me should I require it. On the other hand, Prince di Scalea seemed so anxious for Mr. McGregor to come here, and would no doubt take advantage of his presence to start a technical discussion on the disposal of the water from Lake Tsana, which I hope to avoid, that I am inclined to think it better that he should not come here for the present.

9. There was one point which Prince di Scalea made regarding the last sentence of our proposed note to the Italian Government, in which I think we could meet

him without disadvantage. He said that the word "domestico" in Italian had a technical meaning. If in a legal contract the right of using water for domestic purposes was obtained, this right was confined to its use for drinking, washing, &c., but could not be extended to cover a garden or orchard, even if adjoining the house. When, therefore, our note said, "for domestic purposes including the cultivation of food crops," this could not be translated into Italian without making nonsense. I cannot see any objection to the final sentence of our note running as follows: "For domestic purposes as well as for the cultivation of the food crops necessary to their own subsistence." This does not appear to me to make any difference in the sense.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM.

[J 3148/218/1]

No. 114.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 1615. Confidential.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 29, 1925.

I HAVE received your Excellency's confidential despatch No. 908 of the 23rd instant regarding Lake Tsana and agree that there can be no objection to altering the final sentence of the proposed note in the manner suggested in paragraph 9 of your despatch.

2. For your information I would point out that the "local chiefs" principally interested in Lake Tsana are Ras Hailu, Ras Seyyum and Ras Gugsa. The first named is definitely in favour of the British project; I have no reason to suppose that the second and third are opposed to it. Ras Hailu and Ras Seyyum were both in England with Ras Taffari last year and were in constant touch with Mr. Home on all questions relating to Lake Tsana.

3. Gabra Selassie, on the other hand, who also visited England with Ras Taffari, has no territorial interest in the Tsana district, his territory being in the neighbourhood of Adua, on the other side of the Great Simien mountain range. He was educated at an Italian school, fought for the Italians at Adua and is the Abyssinian chief whose district is nearest to Eritrea. He is a creature of the Empress Zauditu, and was understood to have been sent to Europe last year to spy on Ras Taffari and see that he gave nothing away, particularly in regard to Lake Tsana.

4. Mr. Macgregor is returning to the Sudan via Naples and will in any case spend a few days in Rome towards the middle of November, but you should have no difficulty in preventing the Italian Government from using his presence in Rome as a pretext for indulging in technical quibbles.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

[J 3275/218/1].

No. 115.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 9.)

(No. 146.)

Sir,

Addis Ababa, October 7, 1925.

IN the course of a conversation about French rights in the Harar Province in virtue of the Tripartite Agreement of 1906, the French Minister observed to me that our respective interests in this country were not likely to clash. England's main interest was Lake Tsana, which did not concern France in any way. He personally would be glad to see the question settled in our favour, as the more cotton grown in the Sudan the better for the world in general. He felt sure we should get our way in the end, but it would not be easy, and in fact, in present circumstances, he thought it would be impossible. He was ready to admit that if Ras Taffari had the power we should get the concession, but so long as the Empress blocked everything the Ras tried to do, my colleague did not see how it would be possible for us to obtain our desires. The Empress and the Ras both had great power of a negative kind, but very little

positive power, and they again could always be checkmated by the Council of Advisers, who took care to set the one against the other. It would cost us hundreds of thousands of dollars before we could square all those capable of putting a spoke in our wheel.

2. I told my colleague that I had not yet mentioned the matter to the Ras. M. Gaussen said he did not personally think the moment opportune. He had heard, on what he considered to be good authority, that some time ago the Ras had fallen out of favour with the Empress, and that she had let him know that he would only come back into favour on condition of never referring to the Tsana question.

3. I may here mention that I am fully alive to the difficulties ahead. We must be assured of the support both of Italy and France before we reopen the question. We must have something to offer, and perhaps also be in a position to threaten. When we are quite ready, and not until then, we must strike, and we must then be able to give a knock-out blow, with no possibility of a refusal. My French colleague warned me that we could not risk continually being refused.

I have, &c.

C. H. BENTINCK.

[J 3280/218/1]

No. 116.

Sir R. Graham to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 9.)

(No. 942. Confidential.)

Sir,

Rome, November 7, 1925.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of your despatch No. 1615 of the 29th ultimo regarding Lake Tsana.

2. From my further conversations with the Secretary-General of the Ministry for Foreign Affairs it is clear to me that during the negotiations in the summer the Italian authorities did not contemplate the idea of the publication of the notes to be exchanged. They are now exercised partly over the repercussion of the agreement on the Abyssinian chiefs confining on the Eritrean frontier, which is feared by Dr. Gasparini, but still more over the effect of its publication on Italian public opinion. Senator Contarini says that the Italian Government will be much criticised as having sacrificed the interests of the local chiefs and populations in the territories which are to enter into the Italian zone of economic influence. The Senator and the Minister of the Colonies press strongly that in the notes exchanged some reference should be made to at least the possibility that a certain amount of the additional water which will be made available by the construction of the Tsana dam should be allotted to these chiefs and populations. I have, of course, conveyed to them the information regarding the chiefs principally interested contained in the second and third paragraphs of your despatch under reference. But after consultation with the Minister of the Colonies, Senator Contarini urged that the final paragraph of my draft note should be modified in the sense they desired and should run as follows:—

"Nevertheless, His Britannic Majesty's Government are disposed to consider the possibility that, while the interests of Egypt and the Sudan are integrally respected, the execution of the hydraulic works at Lake Tsana should be carried out in such a way as to allow an equitable satisfaction to be given to the economic needs of the populations of the neighbouring territories entering into the sphere of exclusive Italian economic influence."

I annex the Italian text.

3. I told Senator Contarini that I could not accept this modification. Although the text proposed was certainly vague and only contemplated a "possibility," yet, if included in my note, it would amount to a moral commitment for His Majesty's Government to allot a certain proportion of water to the local inhabitants. Although we had every desire to respect the needs of these inhabitants, I could not accept such a commitment. The final paragraph of my note had been carefully considered and had already been modified to meet Italian wishes; it ought to stand as it was. But I quite realised the desire of the Italian Government to conciliate both the local chiefs on their frontiers and public opinion in this country. I thought that the paragraph he proposed

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would be less objectionable if it were included in the Italian reply to my note. I was prepared to submit such a proposal to you. But it must be understood that the fact of the Italian Government expressing a pious hope in the sense indicated did not involve any commitment on our part to satisfy it. If something could be done in the sense they desired without detriment to the hydraulic interests of Egypt and the Sudan, so much the better, but if not then the hope could not be satisfied and other forms of satisfaction must be found for the local chiefs and inhabitants. Our notes would, of course, be confined to two, as originally proposed, and there would be no answer to the Italian recommendation. After consulting the Minister of the Colonies, Senator Contarini informed me last night that they were prepared to agree to insert the paragraph in the Italian note in reply to my note, which should remain exactly as it was. He also accepted my interpretation of the paragraph as a pious hope on the part of the Italian Government involving no commitment for His Majesty's Government. He added that if this paragraph could be included at the end of the Italian note the rest of that document would simply recapitulate and agree with the terms of my note.

4. I should be grateful for your early instructions as to whether you would entertain any objection to the proposed paragraph in the Italian note. If not, its first sentence would, of course, undergo the necessary modification and I should also propose to substitute "appropriate" for "equitable" as an epithet to be applied to the satisfaction of the economic needs of the Abyssinian population. The definition of "equitable" always appears to give trouble and "appropriate" is a somewhat vaguer term. The two notes would then be submitted to Signor Mussolini and as he has left the matter entirely in the hands of Senator Contarini and the Minister of the Colonies I think that his approval is assured. If you object, I will see Signor Mussolini personally and will endeavour to induce him to override the opinions of Senator Contarini and the Prince di Scalea and to accept our note without making any reference to the eventual distribution of the Lake Tsana water. I may succeed in doing this, but must admit that the argument of Italian public opinion is one to which his Excellency is susceptible.

I have, &c.
R. GRAHAM.

Enclosure in No. 116.

Italian Text of Modification suggested by Senator Contarini.

PERÒ il Governo di Sua Maestà Britannica è disposto a considerare la possibilità che, sempre rispettati nella loro integrità gli interessi del Sudan e dell'Egitto, l'esecuzione delle opere idrauliche nel lago Tsana abbia ad effettuarsi in modo da consentire un equo soddisfacimento dei bisogni economici delle popolazioni dei territori limitrofi che rientrano nella sfera di esclusiva influenza economica dell'Italia.

[J 3260/218/1]

No. 117.

Mr. Murray to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

My dear Graham,

Foreign Office, November 9, 1925.

I HAVE exactly a quarter of an hour in which to catch the bag, so that I cannot possibly give you an official reply to your despatch No. 942 of the 7th November about the Tsana negotiations.

I do not like the idea of the proposed last paragraph in the Italian note even on the understanding that it only represents a pious hope, for, as Malkin points out, if we accept that note *sub silentio* we shall *ipso facto* accept the last paragraph.

The excellent Cory, the American member of the 1920-21 Nile Commission, worked out a principle so far as Egypt and the Sudan were concerned for sharing increased water supplies to be made available by future reservoir construction. In the accompanying rough draft I have attempted to apply that principle to the case of Tsana. I have not had an opportunity of showing this draft to Tyrrell or the Secretary of State, so you must not regard it as representing the official view of the Foreign Office. Malkin, however, agrees with me in thinking that it is preferable to the suggested last

paragraph of the Italian note, and I wish you would see how it strikes Macgregor, who will be with you when this bag reaches Rome. In the meantime I will submit the file to the Secretary of State and obtain his official instructions.

Yours, in great haste,
J. MURRAY.

P.S.—Publication of the notes when exchanged means registration at Geneva, which, under the Covenant, is obligatory. Anything we register is printed and published automatically in our Treaty Series, but is not otherwise broadcast, and often passes without press comment.

J. M.

Enclosure in No. 117.

Suggested Additional Passage in the British Note.

IF, after the construction of the reservoir, it is shown that the inhabitants of the catchment area of Lake Tsana and the Blue Nile in Abyssinia require more water for the irrigation of their lands than they had been accustomed to abstract from the river or its branches before the construction of the reservoir, His Majesty's Government will be ready to negotiate with the Abyssinian Government in order to determine the extent to which these inhabitants shall be allowed, without detriment to the prior rights of Egypt and the Sudan, to share in the additional water made available by the reservoir against payment by the Abyssinian Government to His Majesty's Government of a proportional part of the cost of the reservoir. In the event of His Majesty's Government and the Abyssinian Government being unable to agree as to the share of the water to be taken, or as to the corresponding share of the cost of the reservoir to be paid by the Abyssinian Government to His Majesty's Government, the latter will be ready to submit the question to arbitration.

No. 118.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 13.)

(No. 91.)
(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, November 12, 1925.

BERNE despatch No. 200.

Swiss engineer named Max Sorg has arrived. My French colleague and I understand visit is connected with Tsana question, but engineer himself professed to French Minister ignorance of object of visit.

[J 3275/218/1]

No. 119.

Mr. Austen Chamberlain to Mr. Bentinck (Addis Ababa).

(No. 276.)

Foreign Office, November 16, 1925.

Sir,

I AM glad to learn from your despatch No. 146 of the 7th October of the reasonable and friendly attitude adopted by the French Minister in Addis Ababa towards the question of Lake Tsana.

2. I share the view expressed by M. Gaussen that we cannot afford to run the risk of further rebuffs, and I agree with you that our aim should be to enlist the support of both France and Italy before making a final attempt to overcome Abyssinian opposition to our proposals.

I am, &c.
AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN

No. 120.

Mr. Bentinck to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 18.)

(No. 94.)

(Telegraphic.)

Addis Ababa, November 17, 1925.

MY telegram No. 91.

I learn engineer will shortly leave for the Lakes.

[J 3477/218/1]

No. 121.

Sir R. Graham to Mr. Austen Chamberlain.—(Received November 30.)

(No. 999. Confidential.)

Rome, November 27, 1925.

Sir,

WITH reference to my telegram No. 263, Confidential, of the 12th instant, I have the honour to report that until a few days ago the negotiations with the Italians regarding Lake Tsana had made little or no progress since the stage indicated in my private letter to Mr. Murray of the following day. As reported in my letter, Commendatore Gasparini and Mr. McGregor were deputed to draw up a proposed final paragraph to the Italian note as an alternative to the one originally suggested which had not met with your approval. The paragraph they submitted was to the following effect:—

"I note that His Britannic Majesty's Government have every intention of respecting the existing water rights of the populations of the neighbouring territories which enter in the sphere of exclusive Italian economic influence. It is understood that in so far as is possible and is compatible with the paramount interests of Egypt and the Sudan, the scheme in contemplation should be so framed and executed as to afford appropriate satisfaction to the economic needs of these populations. His Britannic Majesty's Government will keep the Italian Government informed as to the steps they are taking in this sense."

When this paragraph was produced, Mr. McGregor said that on the whole he preferred the original Italian paragraph. I said that the new paragraph seemed to me quite unacceptable. As the Italians had been informed, the inhabitants of the districts around Lake Tsana had an ample supply of rainfall and did not require irrigation facilities. The scheme we proposed contemplated the full utilisation of all the water that could be made available by the barrage; the latter could not therefore be altered in any way to afford satisfaction to the economic needs of the populations in question. This being so there was no information which we should be able to give to the Italian Government on the subject.

2. Since that time there have been frequent conferences between the Italian Ministry for Foreign Affairs and that of the Colonies, but no progress was made in drawing up a more acceptable formula. After repeatedly pressing Senator Contarini on the subject, I decided to see the President of the Council and to enlist his assistance at any rate to the extent of eliciting some approved text which I could submit to you. I explained the whole case carefully to Signor Mussolini on the 22nd instant. He was very sympathetic, and said that, although not fully conversant with the subject, the one point to which he attached importance was to establish full mutual co-operation with us in all such questions. He promised to see that there should be immediate progress in the matter. The next day he sent for the Minister of the Colonies and his collaborators, Commendatore Gasparini, and also Senator Contarini and Commendatore Arlotta, and the whole matter was discussed before him. As a result, Senator Contarini asked to see me last night and showed me the text of an Italian note which had received Signor Mussolini's approval. He supplied me with a copy of it this morning. As far as I can see it is a prolix recapitulation of our note. You will notice the stipulation that the establishment to look after the dam at Lake Tsana should be of a purely civil and technical character. In reading this with Senator Contarini last night I pointed out that a force of armed police might be necessary to protect the establishment

and the engineers employed. He at once agreed that this would be perfectly reasonable. Otherwise I see nothing worthy of remark, but unfortunately the final paragraph remains with only the last sentence, to which I had taken particular objection, omitted.

3. I should like to make quite clear to you the Italian attitude on the question, nor do I believe that there is any *arrière-pensée* behind it. The present Italian Government are considerably more practical than their predecessors, and realise that, while the construction of the dam would bring great material advantages to Egypt and the Sudan, the counter-advantages offered to them are of a less definite character. They recognise that their proposed railway is not a practical proposition and that they are unlikely ever even to begin its construction. They are very doubtful as to the possibility of their exploiting economic advantages in Western Abyssinia, especially if the local chiefs are unfriendly. The implied territorial reversion is most unlikely to be realised at any but a very remote date in view of the entry of Abyssinia into the League of Nations and the expressed intention of the three great Powers concerned to maintain the *status quo* in Ethiopia. As against all this the Italian Government attach great importance to the fact of co-operating with His Majesty's Government in Abyssinia and to the consequent accession of strength to their own position. This consideration outweighs the fear of losing the popularity with the Abyssinians which their previous attitude of opposition to the dam enabled them to enjoy. But they insist that, in order to ensure the success of the forthcoming negotiation with the Abyssinian Government as well as to safeguard their own position with the chiefs of the country bordering on Eritrea and with their own Italian public, it is essential that either our note or theirs should hold out a possible hope that the projected barrage will not be merely of benefit to Egypt and the Sudan but may also bring some advantage to the Abyssinians. They declare that without this it will be impossible to acquire the support of the chiefs either inside or outside the territories around the Blue Nile and that the Italian Government will be accused by their own public of sacrificing the prospects of the districts in which they are to have an immediate economic interest with possible reversionary rights. They contend that while a paragraph of the nature they propose makes it possible for them to conciliate opinion in Abyssinia and in Italy, the qualification of any foreshadowed concession by the phrase "in so far as is possible and is compatible with the paramount interests of Egypt and the Sudan" renders it innocuous and incapable of being abused. Mr. McGregor appeared to me to share this view. So far I have not succeeded in producing a formula which will meet with your and their approval, but it ought not to be impossible to find one. I should be grateful for your suggestions on the subject.

4. I should add that last night I sounded Senator Contarini and Commendatore Arlotta with regard to the proposal made by Mr. Murray in his private letter of the 9th November that additional water made available by the reservoir might be supplied to the Abyssinian Government on the latter paying a proportionate part of its cost. To this proposal Mr. McGregor had entered strong objections. I found that it was equally unpalatable to Senator Contarini and Commendatore Arlotta. They said that it would be the last proposal likely to obtain Abyssinian sympathy, and the same idea occurred to them as to Mr. McGregor that it had the appearance of selling the Abyssinians their own water. They stated further that it would not meet the objections of the Italian Government. I fear, therefore, that I can make no progress on the lines suggested by Mr. Murray.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM.

Enclosure in No. 121.

Draft Italian Note approved by Signor Mussolini.

(Translation.)

M. l'Ambassadeur,

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of the note of the in which your Excellency, on instructions from your Government, drew my attention to the problem of the irrigation of Egypt and the Sudan and to the negotiations hitherto conducted without result by the British Government to obtain from the Abyssinian Government the concession for the construction of a barrage at Lake Tsana, with the object of storing the waters of the lake to feed the Blue Nile.

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Your Excellency recalls in this connection the proposals which were presented in London in November 1919 by the delegates of the Italian Government for an amicable Anglo-Italian co-operation in this question, and you inform me that these proposals were not accepted then, owing to the objection which was felt to the idea of allowing a foreign Power to establish any kind of control over the sources of rivers so vital to the prosperity and even the existence of Egypt and the Sudan, but that now, in view of the relations of reciprocal confidence so happily existing between our two Governments, His Britannic Majesty's Government desire to extend to this question the principle of friendly co-operation which has proved so valuable in other fields.

Your Excellency adds that His Britannic Majesty's Government has accordingly proceeded to a more careful examination of the question and recognises that the Italian proposals are not in contradiction with the provisions of the Agreement of London of the 13th December, 1906, since the object of that agreement is the maintenance of the *status quo* in Ethiopia on the basis of the international instruments indicated in article 1 of the agreement itself and the co-ordination of the action of the signatory States in the protection of their respective interests so that these should not suffer prejudice.

The British Government consequently adhering to the Italian proposals, would welcome the support of Italy provided that it can be accepted without prejudice to those paramount hydraulic interests of Egypt and the Sudan which the Italian Government themselves have recognised.

Your Excellency, therefore, on instructions from your Government, requests the support and assistance of the Italian Government with the Ethiopian Government in order to obtain from the latter the concession to construct a barrage on Lake Tsana, together with the right to maintain a corridor road for the passage of stores, personnel, &c., as also the right to maintain an adequate establishment for the surveillance and protection of the dam.

Your Excellency declares to me that His Britannic Majesty's Government will in return support the Italian Government in obtaining from the Abyssinian Government the concession to construct and operate a railway from the frontier of Eritrea to the frontier of Italian Somaliland, it being understood that such railway, together with all the necessary works for its construction and operation, shall have free transit across the corridor mentioned above.

With this object, your Excellency adds, the necessary and identic instructions should be sent to the British and Italian representatives in Ethiopia to concert for common action with the Abyssinian Government, in order to obtain that the concessions desired by the British and Italian Governments regarding Lake Tsana and the construction of a railway to connect Eritrea with Italian Somaliland should be granted contemporaneously. It remains understood that, in the event of one of the two Governments securing the concession sought for while the other Government failed to do so, the Government which had obtained satisfaction would not relax their greatest efforts to secure a corresponding satisfaction for the other Government concerned.

Your Excellency then states that, in the event of His Majesty's Government, with the effective support of the Italian Government, obtaining from the Abyssinian Government the concession asked for at Lake Tsana, the British Government will also recognise the exclusive character of Italian economic influence in the west of Abyssinia and in the whole of the territory crossed by the above-mentioned railway. The British Government will further support with the Ethiopian Government all Italian demands for economic concessions in the above-mentioned zone. Such recognition and undertaking are, however, subject to the proviso that the Italian Government, on their side, recognising the prior hydraulic rights of Egypt and the Sudan, will engage not to construct on the head waters of the Blue Nile and the White Nile and their tributaries and affluents any work which might sensibly modify their flow into the main river.

Your Excellency finally states that it remains understood that the above proviso would not preclude a reasonable use of the waters in question by the inhabitants of the region, even to the extent of constructing dams for hydro-electric power or small reservoirs in minor affluents for storing water for domestic purposes, as well as for the cultivation of the food products necessary to their own subsistence.

In reply to the above-mentioned declarations and requests of your Excellency, I have the honour to state on my part that the Royal Government have taken note that the British Government recognise the desirability of extending to the question referred to the principle of friendly collaboration which has proved so valuable in

other fields; this has been noted with all the more satisfaction inasmuch as it is my conviction that such co-operation will be the more useful the further it is extended.

The Royal Government have further taken note that His Britannic Majesty's Government are now persuaded that the Italian proposals presented in November 1919 are not in contradiction with the provisions of the Agreement of London of the 13th December, 1906, since the object of that agreement (as Italy has always maintained) is the maintenance of the *status quo* in Ethiopia on the basis of the international agreements indicated in article 1 of the agreement itself and the co-ordination of the action of the signatory States in the protection of their respective interests so that these should not suffer prejudice.

This being granted, although the above-mentioned proposals presented in London in November 1919 formed part of a wider negotiation of a colonial character arising out of the Treaty of London of 1915, a negotiation which had only partial results, the Royal Government, nevertheless, agree to take up again the proposals in question, especially sharing the desire of the British Government to realise the principle of friendly co-operation, and, further, trusting that this principle may be continually further extended for the protection and development of the respective Italian and British interests in Ethiopia, naturally on the bases and within the limits of the provisions of the London Agreement of 1906.

I have therefore the honour to state to your Excellency that the Royal Government will support the British Government with the Ethiopian Government in order to obtain from the latter the concession to construct a barrage at Lake Tsana, together with the right to maintain a corridor road for the passage of stores and personnel, as also the right to maintain an adequate establishment for the surveillance of the dam, it being understood that this establishment will entail the presence only of the civilian technical personnel strictly necessary for the purpose referred to.

The Royal Government take note, on the other hand, that the British Government will, in return, support the Italian Government in obtaining from the Abyssinian Government the concession to construct and operate a railway from the frontier of Eritrea to the frontier of Italian Somaliland, it remaining understood that this railway, together with all the necessary works for its construction and operation, shall have free transit through the corridor mentioned above.

With this object the Italian Government will send the necessary instructions to the Italian representative in Addis Ababa in an identic sense to those which the British Government will send to their own representative, to concert a common line of action with the Abyssinian Government in order to obtain that the concessions asked for by the British and Italian Governments regarding Lake Tsana and the railway connecting Eritrea and Somaliland should be granted contemporaneously. It remains understood that, in the event of one of the two Governments securing the concession sought by them, while the other failed to do so, the Government which had obtained satisfaction would not relax their most effective efforts to secure a corresponding satisfaction for the other Government concerned, with the object of ensuring that practical execution of the two concessions should, if possible, be contemporaneous.

The Royal Government take note that, in the event of His Britannic Majesty's Government, with the effective support of the Italian Government, obtaining from the Abyssinian Government the concession asked for on Lake Tsana, they will recognise the exclusive character of Italian economic influence in the west of Abyssinia and in the whole of the territory to be crossed by the above-mentioned railway, and will also support with the Ethiopian Government all Italian demands for economic concessions in the above zone.

On their side, the Italian Government, recognising the prior hydraulic rights of Egypt and the Sudan, engage not to construct on the head waters of the Blue Nile and the White Nile and their tributaries and affluents any work which might sensibly modify their flow into the main river.

I note that His Britannic Majesty's Government have every intention of respecting the existing water rights of the populations of the neighbouring territories which enter into the sphere of exclusive Italian economic influence. It is understood that, in so far as is possible and is compatible with the paramount interests of Egypt and the Sudan, the scheme in contemplation should be so framed and executed as to afford appropriate satisfaction to the economic need of these populations.

[J 3477/218/1]

No. 122.

Sir Austen Chamberlain to Sir R. Graham (Rome).

(No. 1895.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, December 10, 1925.

I HAVE carefully considered the draft Italian note which formed the subject of your despatch No. 999 of the 27th ultimo relative to your negotiations with the Italian Government regarding Lake Tsana, and I share your view that, except on the ground of prolixity, it may be regarded as containing nothing that is seriously objectionable now that the sentence to which your Excellency took particular exception has been dropped. As the note in its present form represents the best that His Majesty's Government can hope to obtain from the Italian Government in the circumstances of these negotiations, I am prepared to accept it as it stands.

2. I fully appreciate the importance of forestalling possible Italian criticism. It is no less important to afford critics in Abyssinia as little opportunity as possible of attacking the Anglo-Italian Agreement. With this object in view, I have been considering the addition of a paragraph to the draft British note which would to some extent balance the concluding paragraph of the Italian note. The passage which I had in mind reads as follows:—

"His Majesty's Government avail themselves of this opportunity to assure the Italian Government that the construction and operation of the dam will be effected, so far as possible, with locally recruited labour, and will not raise the level of the waters in the lake beyond the maximum hitherto attained during the rainy season. They are therefore confident that the existence of the dam will not only be of value to Egypt and the Sudan, but will increase the prosperity and promote the economic progress of the local inhabitants."

3. The above passage does not go further than the memorandum communicated to Ras Taffari on the 18th July, 1924, during the course of his visit to London. A copy of this memorandum is enclosed for convenience of reference. I shall be glad if you will take an early opportunity of ascertaining whether the Italian Government will agree to the addition to the British note suggested above, in which case there is nothing to prevent the exchange of notes taking place without delay.

I am, &c.

AUSTEN CHAMBERLAIN.

Enclosure in No. 122.

Memorandum as given to Ras Taffari on July 18, 1924.

L'IMPORTANCE du lac Tsana au point de vue de l'irrigation dans les pays situés en aval de la frontière entre l'Abyssinie et le Soudan a toujours été reconnue; elle fut soulignée dans le rapport de Sir W. Garstin. A ce rapport fut annexé le récit de la mission de M. Dupuis en Abyssinie, qui visita le lac en 1903 et constata que le débit au débouché du lac atteignait, au mois de janvier, environ 42 mètres cubes par seconde.

D'après M. Dupuis, la valeur du lac comme réservoir dépend entièrement de l'écoulement annuel, qu'il estimait atteindre la moyenne de trois milliards (3,000,000,000) de mètres cubes dans les années de pluies défectueuses. Il se rendit bien compte que tout projet visant le contrôle des eaux ne devrait occasionner aucune gêne aux habitants riverains.

Il s'ensuivit que la cote maximum des eaux du lac converti en réservoir ne devrait jamais dépasser la cote atteinte actuellement au moment de la crue.

En 1915, à la suite de négociations diplomatiques, une commission présidée par le Colonel Pearson, Directeur du Département topographique du Soudan, qui fut accompagné par Messrs. Buckley, Thompson et Zaphiro, d'une part, et de Likamakwas Abagaz, Ato Takla Hawariat, Fitarari Melki et Ato Tasfai, de l'autre, fut autorisée à poursuivre les études sur place.

Malheureusement, les événements politiques entravèrent les travaux de la commission et rendirent impossible le jaugeage du débit au débouché du lac; on parvint cependant

à faire des études intéressantes en ce qui concerne les bords du lac. En 1920, une nouvelle mission, dirigée par Mr. Graham, fut autorisée; celle-ci jaugea le débit pendant la saison des pluies et pendant l'étiage de 1921, et grâce à ses études le projet pour l'utilisation du lac comme réservoir a pu être élaboré.

Pendant les douze mois écoulés entre les étiages de 1920 et 1921, le lac fournit un débit de 3,460 millions de mètres cubes au débouché; il y a lieu de croire que ce chiffre représente une valeur moyenne de la capacité du lac comme réservoir; par conséquent, la superficie des terrains pouvant être arrosés au moyen d'un barrage serait de 300,000 feddans (120,000 hectares) au minimum par an.

La mise en valeur du lac consisterait dans le contrôle de l'écoulement pendant les périodes de surabondance des eaux dans le Nil Bleu, afin d'augmenter le débit de ce fleuve pendant l'étiage. Il suffirait dans ce but de construire sur le seuil rocheux de la cataracte qui forme le débouché du lac un barrage constitué de piles de maçonnerie de moellons; ces piles seraient munies de coulisses en fonte dans lesquelles on aménagerait des planches mobiles en bois qui permettraient de régler le niveau de l'eau dans le réservoir. Les matériaux qu'il faudrait importer afin de construire un barrage de ce genre seraient de poids et de dimensions relativement restreints; par conséquent, le transport de ces matériaux jusqu'au pied d'œuvre ne présenterait aucune difficulté. Le barrage, une fois construit, serait formé au moment des plus basses eaux, c'est-à-dire vers la fin de juin de chaque année; il resterait clos jusqu'à l'époque de manque d'eau dans le Nil Bleu vers le mois de janvier suivant.

Les terrains riverains du lac ne sont en général arrosables qu'en quelques rares endroits, où les eaux suffiraient largement aux besoins des intéressés. D'autre part, comme le barrage permettrait un contrôle du niveau des eaux, la cote qu'atteindraient les eaux après la construction du barrage ne dépasserait jamais 31,000 mètres, de sorte qu'il n'y aurait plus lieu de craindre des inondations sur les rivages même aux époques des plus fortes pluies. On peut ainsi écarter définitivement tout risque de submersion des îles sacrées du lac à la suite de la construction du barrage, et le Gouvernement britannique est tout disposé à donner les assurances les plus formelles à ce sujet. Bien au contraire, le contrôle des eaux aurait pour effet de réduire l'étendue des marais dans le voisinage du lac, ce qui contribuerait, sans doute, à l'assainissement de ces marais. Dans ces conditions, il est évident que la construction du barrage serait de l'intérêt de l'Abyssinie; d'ailleurs, les travaux de construction et d'entretien auraient une répercussion favorable sur la vie économique des habitants de la localité, étant données les fortes sommes qui seraient dépensées pour salaires, location de mulets, &c.

Il serait, sans doute, nécessaire de faire venir environ une centaine d'ouvriers spécialistes pour la construction du barrage; il est cependant à remarquer qu'une fois les travaux achevés, la direction de la main-d'œuvre engagée sur place parmi les habitants n'exigera la présence que de deux ou trois ingénieurs européens.

[J 3736/218/1]

No. 123.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 25.)

(No. 302.)

(Telegraphic.)

Rome, December 24, 1925.

YOUR despatch No. 1895.

Text of notes is agreed, and they have both been actually signed. But exchange was held up at last moment by pretensions advanced by Minister for the Colonies regarding our assurance about Wady Shebeli, which went considerably further than anything I was authorised to give. After a frank expression of opinion to Minister and Secretary-General, I think I have persuaded them to separate the two questions altogether. But in the meantime Signor Mussolini had left for Milan for Christmas, and formal exchange cannot take place until he returns.

(Repeated to Cairo.)

No. 124.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 28.)(No. 303.)
(Telegraphic.)

Rome, December 27, 1925.

MY telegram No. 302 and my despatch No. 1076.

Formal exchange of notes regarding Lake Tsana took place yesterday evening. Notes were dated 14th December and 20th December respectively. Italian Government agree that text should be communicated to the French Government, and as soon as they learn your definite decision on the subject will instruct Italian Ambassador in Paris to concert with his British colleague.

(Repeated to Cairo.)

[J 3743/218/1]

No. 125.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 28.)(No. 304.)
(Telegraphic.)

Rome, December 27, 1925.

MY immediately preceding telegram.

Strong, not to say severe, language I used to Secretary-General moved him to send Arlotta to Naples in pursuit of Minister for the Colonies. Arlotta extracted from the Minister consent to immediate exchange of notes without any further reference to Wady Shebeli, which was to be reserved for future discussion.

Italians appear to attach great importance to Wady Shebeli, and as success of Tsana Agreement will depend so much on spirit of their co-operation, it seems advisable to try and meet them if possible. Italians object to following phrase in assurance that I was authorised to give them: "In eventuality contemplated by them, viz., the definite establishment of British and Italian control of their respective spheres of influence in Southern Abyssinia." They say that this implies a reversional right over upper waters of Wady Shebeli which has never been contemplated in previous agreements; further, that we should in the meantime be free to assist Abyssinians to construct works on upper waters, thereby ruining works on lower waters constructed by themselves at great expense. I do not imagine that we have ever entertained any such idea. Would you object to my giving Italians a verbal assurance in more general terms to the effect that "His Majesty's Government neither desire nor intend (or even simply do not intend) to construct works on Wady Shebeli"? I believe that this would satisfy them, and it might obviate necessity of further negotiations on the subject.

(Sent to Cairo.)

[J 3754/218/1]

No. 126.

Sir R. Graham to Sir Austen Chamberlain.—(Received December 29.)

(No. 1076.)

Sir,

Rome, December 24, 1925.

IMMEDIATELY upon the receipt of your despatch No. 1895 of the 10th instant I entered into communication with the Italian authorities with a view to the exchange of notes regarding Lake Tsana. The Italian Government had no objection to the passage suggested by you for the end of the British note, and indeed welcomed it. The two notes were drawn up and were actually signed, mine under date of the 14th December, and the Italian note on the 20th December. But at the last moment the Minister of Colonies pressed that before the exchange of notes took place the Italian Government should receive an assurance regarding the Wadi Shebeli, and he persuaded Signor Mussolini to agree to this. I at once offered an assurance in the terms of Mr. Murray's letter to Mr. Bottomley of the 9th October. But this did not at all satisfy the Prince di Scalea, who submitted an alternative proposal containing

an assurance of British support to the Italian Government in endeavouring to prevent any works being erected on the Wadi Shebeli. I pointed out that this went considerably beyond anything that I was authorised to offer, and I expressed in the strongest terms my surprise, and indeed resentment, at such a condition being introduced at the last moment. After conversations with the Prince di Scalea and Senator Contarini I think that I succeeded in bringing them round to my point of view that the questions of Lake Tsana and the Wadi Shebeli had in reality no connection and should be treated altogether separately. But, in the meantime, Signor Mussolini had left for Milan, where he will spend the Christmas holidays. Senator Contarini declared that as he had in his possession the Italian signed note he would be able to give it to me even in Signor Mussolini's absence if the Minister of the Colonies agreed. But before he could communicate with the Prince di Scalea on the subject the latter had also left Rome to spend Christmas at Naples. The question is therefore delayed for another week, but I hope to carry through the exchange of notes as soon as Signor Mussolini and the Prince di Scalea return to Rome.

I have, &c.

R. GRAHAM